—PREMIERE ISSUE—

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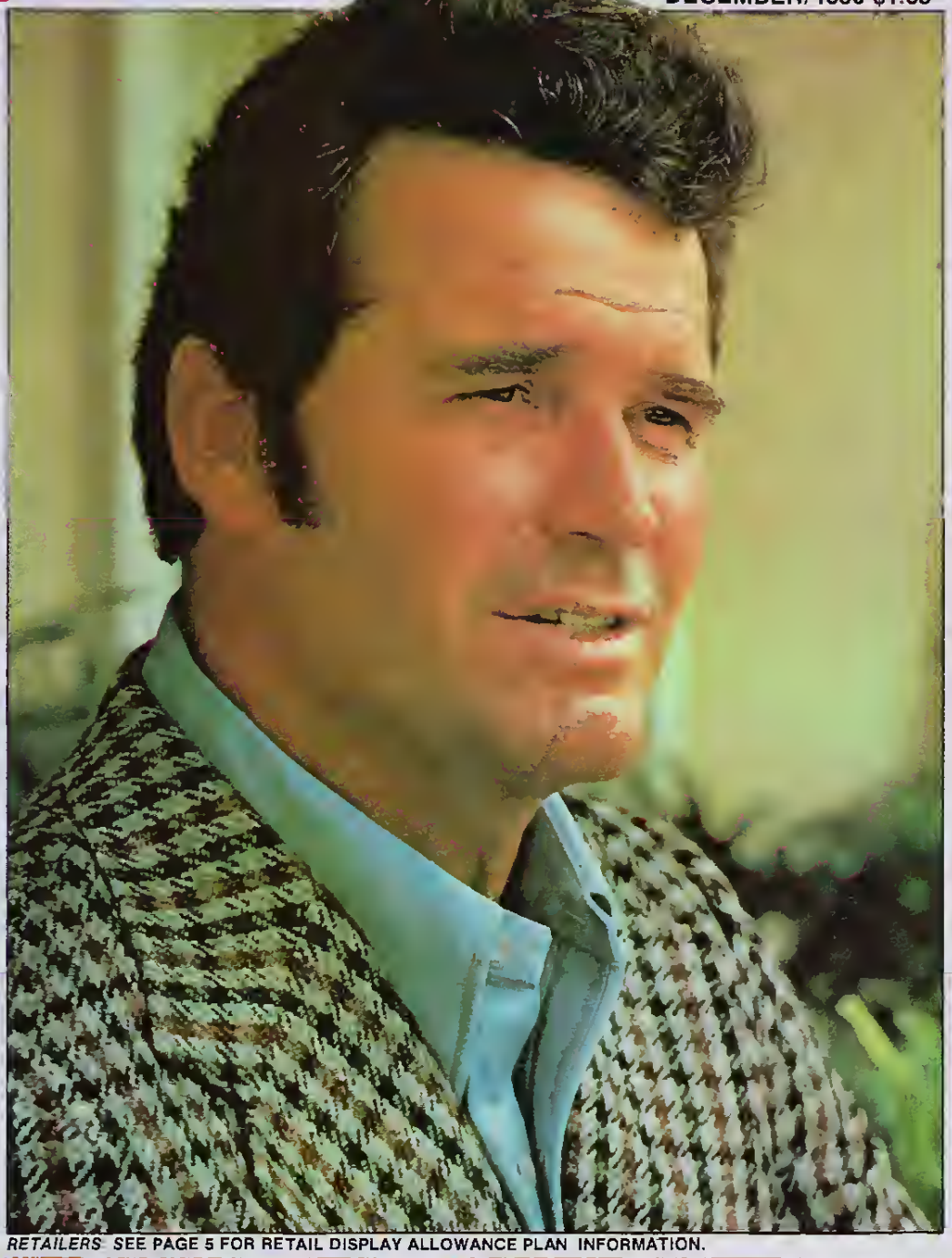

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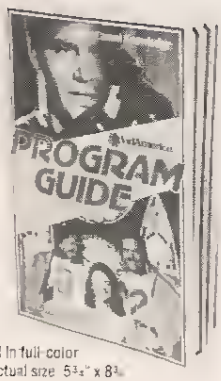

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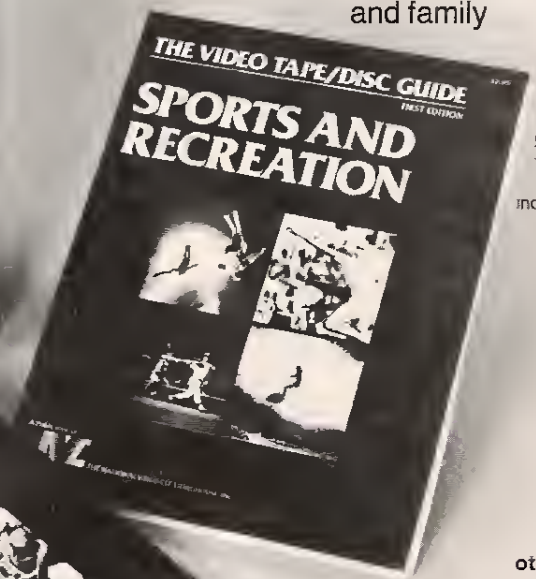

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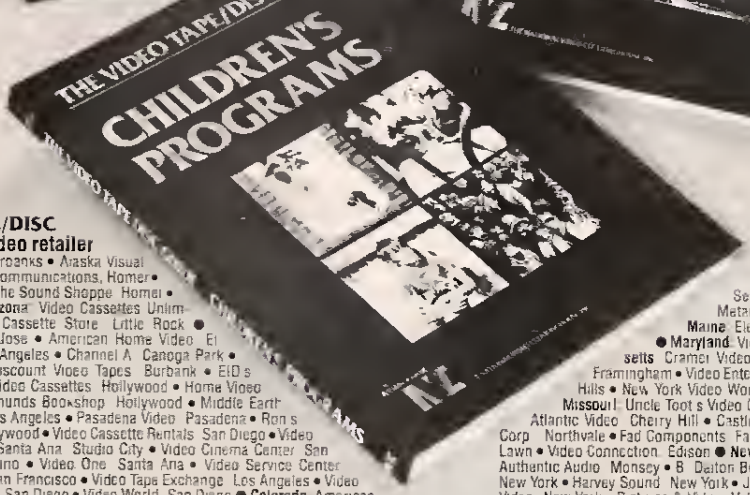

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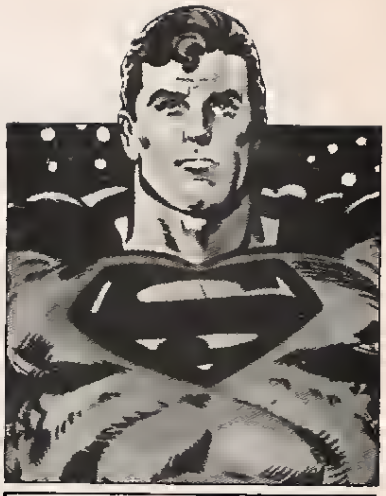

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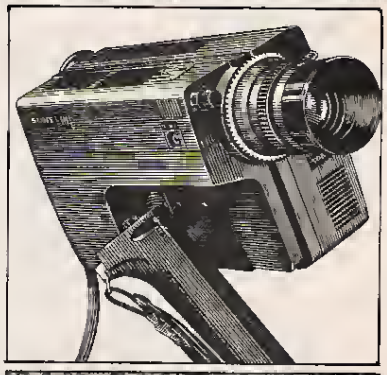

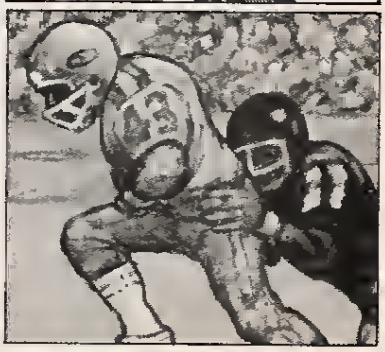

DEPARTMENTS

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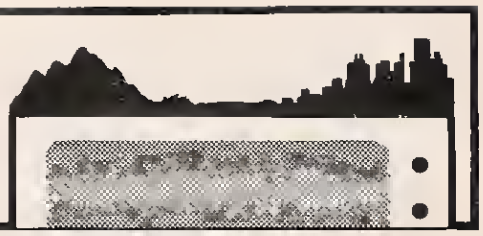

SHORTLY BEFORE THE JUNE, 1980 Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, I was talking with a young man who manages a toy store for relatively affluent adults. It is the store of the future, with a full line of home video gear, games, remote control toy cars and airplanes, electronic jewelry, calculators, translators and the like.

He turned to me and waved his hand across his carpeted showroom. "None of this," he said, "was around two years ago. None of it will be here two years from now. I'm not sure what *will* be here, but it will be even better."

I think that is what the 1980s are all about. The invention of the transistor and the computer chip revolutionized the electronics industry, and they have started to revolutionize our life - style as well.

My father is an accountant. When I was a child, he occassionally would have to lug home a 50 pound adding machine—you might remember the type, with over one hundred buttons and a big crank on the side. If I were to have told him that, within 25 years, he would be able to buy a calculator the size of a wrist watch that would perform all the functions of his 50-pounder, he would have sent me to a psychiatrist.

We can do things today we could not even dream about a decade ago.

Keeping on top of it is what *VIDEO ACTION* is all about.

In some of our pre-publication promotion, we said *VIDEO ACTION* would he more than just a television-oriented *Popular Mechanics* (not to disparage another fine magazine). That is true—today's video world is far, far more than the latest gimmick on the newest video cassette machine, although that is of importance. *VIDEO ACTION* will stay on top of all the technological developmetns in the field: disc, games, satellites and more.

VIDEO ACTION will also stay on top of what information is being carried by those media. We will talk with the programmers and the creators. We will discuss the various cable networks and look into the types of shows available. We will cover all types of television shows—old and new—currently being broadcast on network, independent and cable television. We will cover news, sports, talk and special events programming.

We will not ignore network television. In spite of all the technological advances, and maybe because of them, network television already has shown signs of growth in the areas of news, sports and events. Prime time programming accounts for the vast majority of all television use, and *VIDEO ACTION* will stay on top of it.

And as they say on the talk shows, we're glad to have you with us.

—Mike Gold,
Editor

(Our letters section will begin in several months—if we receive your letter. Write to us at VIDEO ACTION, 21 W. ELM ST CHICAGO, ILL. 60610 *Keep those cards and letters coming in, folks.)*

Illustration by Tom James

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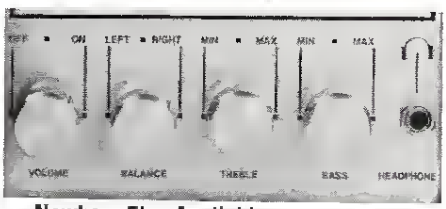

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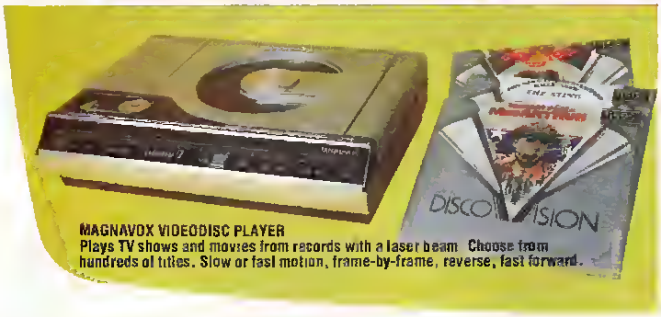

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VCRs

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Do you have an average of 2.9 television sets in your household of 3.3 people?

Do you watch 323 minutes of television a day?

Do you own a VH5-format video cassette recorder rather than the Beta system?

If you answered yes to the above questions then you are an average video cassette recorder owner, according to a survey of 250 VCR owners in 16 major metropolitan areas conducted by the Office of Communications Reseach of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

And if you are indeed average there are several other statistics you ought to know about yourself:

—You own between 25 and 32 cassettes, 58.6 per cent of which contain episodes of telvision series recorded directly off the air. You do not seem to be too interested in sports, though. A mere 2.9 per cent of your recorded material is sports oriented.

—Movies are not high on your list either, with 54 per cent of you owning fewer than five movies on tape. But of those five films, 53 per cent of them are pre-recorded regular movies, 6.4 per cent are classified as "family" films and 40 per cent are x-rated adult films.

—For the most part when you record directly off your television it is to watch later at a more convenient time. 61 per cent of that material is replayed within 24 hours of being recorded, but, if you have not watched that tape within four days, there is only a 2 per cent chance that it will ever be viewed. In fact, 30 per cent of the programs you record will never be replayed.

—For those of you with a fast-forward control on your VCR, 61 per cent of you use it to skip over commercials on programs recorded at home. That's because fully half of you record programs while nobody is watching television, while another 25 per cent of you record one show while watching another program. 35 per cent of the fast-forwarding takes place to avoid what is called "boring" material.

—And, finally, of the 1.5 million video cassette recorder owners in this country, between 4 per cent and 25 per cent of you own not one but two VCRs. And that number is expected to raise to anywhere between 5.5 and 6.8 million recorders within the next four years.

At These Prices You'd Better Say "Caviar!"

Practical and somewhat affordable cameras for video cassette recorders are still about half-a-decade down the pike. Sony now has a prototype 4-pound camera which is expected to sell for about $1,000 (or its 1985 equivalent) to the general public. An industrial version is expected to be available in 1981. Again, that old nemisis of the consumer is raising its head in this area: compatibility. Sony is very interested in making its system *the* system and competitors are now holding board meetings to determine if they should thumb their noses or go along.

BASF LVR: RIP

Manufacturers of the VHS and Beta format video cassette recorders are breathing a little easier these days thanks to the news from BASF and Toshiba. Both these companies had been laboring long and hard at developing a third and definitely competitive video cassette format, the Longitudinal Video Recorder (LVR), but both announced that they were dropping plans for the introduction of this system.

THE LVR was to be a new lightweight portable recorder, using a smaller, ¼-inch tape cassette instead of the ½-inch tape employed by the other systems currently on the market. LVRs were no idle dream of these two electronics companies either. BASF was all set to get to work in a newly purchased California based manufacturing plant, which has since been put up for sale.

The reason for the LVR's demise? Price. According to BASF, the LVR could not be marketed in a price range that would allow it to compete against a similar, Japanese-produced system, that is, for under $1,000.

Of course, the Beta and VHS manufacturers should not get too cocky. Even though no timetable has been established for its development and introduction, BASF also announced plans to begin work on a "second-generation" LVR.

Firing A Warning Shot Across The Bow Of Their VCRs

The Society for the Advancement of Audio-Visual rights (SADA) is mad as hell and they're not going to take it anymore. The private company is dedicated to wiping out audio-visual piracy and protecting the rights and interests of 30 local and foreign producers of A-V material.

A court in Montreal will have to decide whether or not 14 junior colleges in Quebec are guilty of illegally pirating copyrighted material from rented films and over the air television broadcasts by transferring them to video cassettes without paying the residual fees required by law. SADA represents many of the firms whose property was misused by the colleges and polices such matters as who can copy what from where—provided the proper licensing fees are paid to the holders of copyrights.

With the issue of the rights of the producers vs. the rights of VCR

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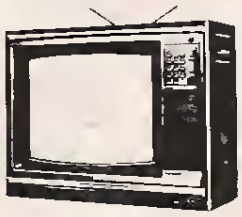
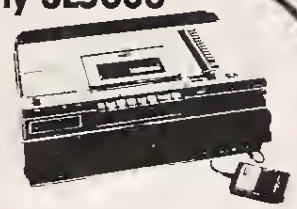


Sony SL5600



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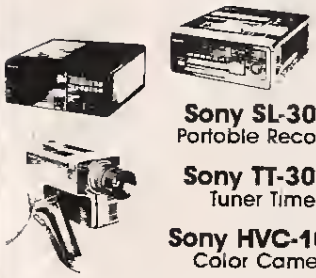

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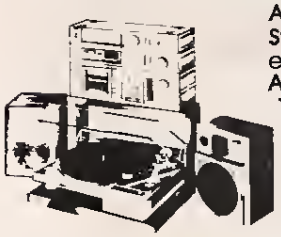

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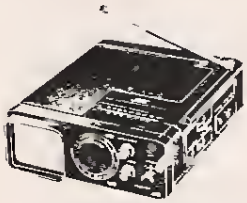

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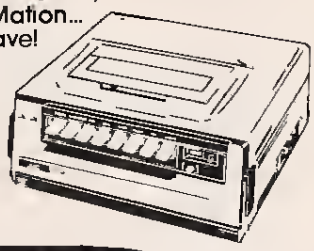

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owners to record their material so much in the public eye these days, it is certain that there are a lot of people watching and waiting for the Montreal court's decision.

Pass The Popcorn, Pop ... We're In For A Long Haul!

You may never have to go to the theater again!

Thanks to the proliferation of movie packaging deals between the major film studios and various video cassette and video disc manufacturers, just about everything you will ever want to see will soon be available for home viewing. This phenomenon took yet another giant step forward with several agreements recently announced by such companies as Magnetic Video Corporation, BC Video Enterprises and RCA SelectaVision video disc.

MVC—a subsidiary of 20th Century-Fox—has made the largest and most impressive deals that include the film catalogs of two of Hollywood's biggies. United Artists, which has held off licensing its backlog of movies until now, has granted the home video rights to MVC of 250 of its titles, including many of the James Bond and Pink Panther films. The $45 million package of films includes the rights to 150 UA titles, 50 movies produced by Warner Brothers before 1949, as well as the first option on at least 50 films to be produced by UA in the next seven years.

ABC Video Enterprises has also signed with MVC to release a package of 88 made-for-television and theatrical movies, including highlights of the 1980 Winter Olympics, as well as 20 feature films, several of which were directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

ABC Video has also been active on the videodisc front, having licensed a series of five 90-minute boxing programs for release by RCA SelectaVision. Also upcoming from RCA are five classic features from Janus Films, including films by Fellini and Bergman.

Just think—all these swell movies ... and no ushers to make you take your feet off the seats.

VIDEODISCS

"Let's See That Pass Again, Howard ... And Again ... And Again ..."

With an estimated 200,000 RCA Selectavision videodisc players expected to be sold during 1981, the folks at RCA are scouting high and low for programming to sell with them. RCA's executive vice president Roy Pollack predicts that approximately 2,000,000 RCA-label discs will be sold next year along with the aforementioned players and that means they have a lot of platters to fill.

Naturally, programming that comes with a built-in audience is always preferrable to something off the beaten track, and what could have a better pre-sold viewership than football? With this in mind, RCA has signed with the National Football League's film division to package highlights from Super Bowls and other football games past.

Considering that football games attract anywhere from an average of 37,000,000 viewers for a typical Sunday afternoon game, to over 100,000,000 for Super Bowls, football on videodisc is a good bet. And you do not have to be Jimmy the Greek to figure that out.

CABLE

Ready, Willing and (C)able

Local community assisted access channels are alive and well in these United States, according to a survey released by the National Cable Television Association (NCTA). In fact, the *Cable Services Report: Local Programming, 1979-80* shows that

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community-access channels carried on cable television have increased by an impressive 80 per cent.

Of the cable subscribers who responded to the NCTA survey, 88 per cent of them receive this local programming. And what can they expect to see? Despite what you may think, it's not all fun and games. Over 3,300 hours per week of educational programming goes out over these channels, most of it initiated or co-produced by the cable systems.

Over 2.75 million homes wired for the service receive public service and politically oriented broadcasts, while 30 per cent of the survey's respondents said they were currently developing or expanding their political coverage.

So at community access channels across the country it's business as usual—and that business, it seems, is good for the community. And getting better every day.

Somewhere Over The Rainbow

It's getting so you can't turn around these days without tripping over a new cable network or service. This month is no different, with the introduction of Rainbow Programming, a joint service of Cablevision Systems, Comcast and Daniels and Associates.

Rainbow plans to present a feature called *Sneak Preview*, which offers first-run films not yet seen on other pay or cable television services. *Bravo*, another package offered on this new service, will include such cultural programming as classical concerts, ballet, opera and jazz, while *Escapade* will showcase a series of action adventure films.

Sneak Preview will not start off as a regular service, being featured instead on a bi-weekly basis as part of *Bravo*. Cablevision has been contracted to help produce these cultural events, which will be filmed around the country. The folks at Rainbow hope eventually to spin *Sneak Preview* off as an independent, full-time movie service.

Dereg De Rigueur

The FCC has cleared the way for cable systems to open up their programming even more. By a 4-3 vote the Commission decided to repeal rules dealing with exclusive syndication and distant signals. This means that cable can now offer more programming from other cities, a situation limited previously by stipulations concerning the number of distant broadcast signals cable could deliver. Cable was further shakled by syndicated exclusivity rules which made cable systems black out programs from other cities if a local broadcaster had purchased exclusive rights to the show.

The repeals were the result of FCC reports which found little correlation between cable's carriage of broadcast signals and broadcast audience, revenues, or profits. The Commission concluded that deregulation would not adversely affect local TV stations and simultaneously, consumers of video would profit through product diversity. As to be expected, the National Association of Broadcasters is in a rage and has vociferously appealed while the National Cable Television Association is popping corks.

My Network Can Lick Your CATV Any Old Day

"The reports of the terminal illness in network TV are premature at best. The commercial networks will remain alive and well for a long time."

Thus spoke Joseph Ostrow, executive vice president of Young and Rubicam, the advertising agency with the biggest billings in network television, almost $450,000,000. Headlines had been heralding the sad, untimely demise of network television at the hands of those insidious cable systems and the folks at Y&R thought it was about time somebody set the record straight, especially since the nets are their bread and butter.

According to the agency spokesmen, cable and the other new video media has done very little in making inroads into the network's profits and their ability to reach the viewing public. Even with a 7 per cent national penetration by CATV, the nets ratings are down by less than a point. Even if cable were to be introduced into every television household in the country the effect would be negligible, they believe.

All Dick Tracy Ever Had Was A Wristwatch

Still another innovation in the cable field . . . Fred Kirkbride, the Chief of Police in Massillon, Ohio, has the ability to gain emergency

(Continued on Page 2B)

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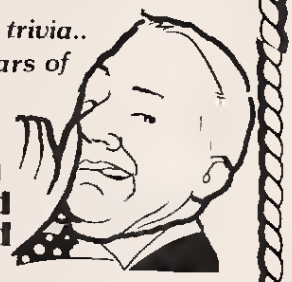

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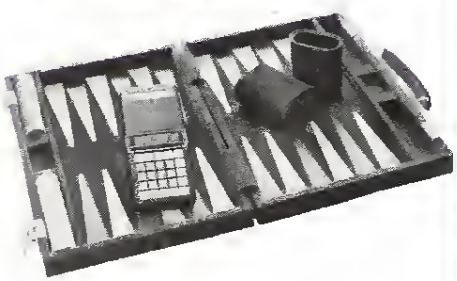

OMAR III packaged with tournament size deluxe Backgammon set finished in luxury suede-like fabric. Batteries required.

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Illustration by Jay Kinney

FUTURE-SPEAK

IF YOU THINK CABLE AND TAPE HAVE CHANGED TELEVISION, SIT TIGHT. THE BEST IS YET TO COME.

SPECULATION by Mike Gold

In spite of the vast technological revolution that has swept our society during the 32-year history of network television, the television medium itself has changed little. In 1948, a viewer could select from a limited number of types of programming: movies, sports, news, situation comedies, dramas, and theater.

Since then, we have seen an incredible refinement in the manner in which these types of shows are presented—we now have global and even interplanetary capabilities. But we only have been able to add one truly original category—events—to the above list during the ensuing three decades.

That we are on the cusp of a new era is not an original thought. Satellites, cable, home tape and disc have all given us the potential for changing the video medium so thoroughly that, within the next five or ten years, it will not resemble its former self. Everything we expect to see on network television will still be there, but it will be competing with hundreds of different types of material.

By the year 1990, nearly every viewer will be wired into cable television, or, at the very least, will be able to choose between two or three over-the-air pay television stations which will offer the most impressive qualities of cable television. Over 20 per cent of all television households have cable or pay-TV today; by the end of the decade, energy crises and economic oblivion aside, this penetration could be complete.

Video cassette recorders have been on the market in their most commercial form for less than five years, yet 2% of all television households already have them. Somebody in one out of every 50 homes and apartments decided to spend anywhere from $700 to $3,500 on a video cassette recorder (not to mention a lot of money on blank and pre-recorded tape) so that they can manipulate broadcast programming; they can tape a program in order to watch it at a more convenient time, or they can buy or rent a movie, concert or sports event and circumvent

broadcast television entirely.

This person layed out a lot of cash in a time when money became very, very tight—in a time when many consumers believe we are on the threshold of economic depression.

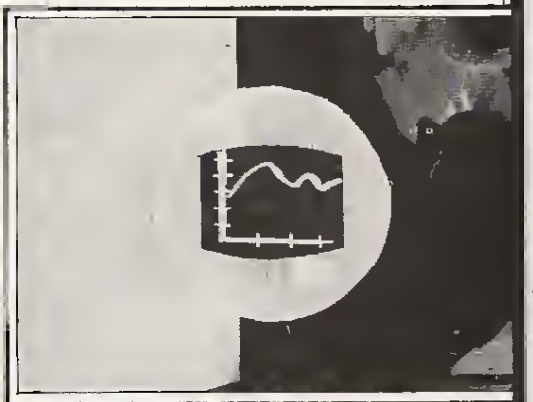
All this is incredible, to be sure, but, to paraphrase the words of the immortal Al Jolson at the end of the first major talking motion picture: "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

With the continued growth of cable television and video cassette recorders, and the forthcoming nationwide distribution of videodisc players, we presently have the technological capability of changing the very structure of our lives,—the very fabric of our society. With the advances that appear to be just around the corner, we are likely to be entering into an age so profoundly different it could not have been predicted by the most optimistic and futuristic science fiction writer.

The two most important components of this future growth are available today: two-way cable television and television sets with digital tuners capable of offering over 100 different channels. This latter component really is not necessary—some present-day tuners supplied by cable outfits are capable of selecting among up to four dozen different channels, but the built-in model (Zenith offers one with 100-plus capability) is vastly more convenient.

Two-way cable, for those who have not been following the Qube experiment from Warner Communications, is similar to "traditional" cable with one important difference: it allows the viewer to talk back to the cable company. It allows for instant selection among a greater number of channels, it allows for the viewer to offer any of a variety of multiple-choice responses to issues that affect the entire community, and it allows for "Nielsen" type ratings which will give programmers an instant and complete picture of the public's response to its efforts.

(This third aspect of two-way cable, instant ratings, is the subject of some controversy in many neighborhoods that are considering cable proposals. It seems some people believe a diary of their television habits could be made available to junk mail companies and the like, and that such capability therefore would be in violation of their right to privacy. Given recent trends in marketing and information-gathering, these concerns are not entirely unfounded and such capabilities probably will have to be safeguarded in order for two-way cable to gain national acceptance.)



We presently have the technological capability of changing the very structure of our lives.

Two-way cable television can offer us untold opportunities.

Entertainment programming will change greatly. To be sure, everything we have come to expect from television will still be there: programs like *M*A*S*H* and *Charlie's Angels* are too popular to be anything less than a major factor in the market. But network television adequately supplies us with this, and network television will find itself competing with a lot of other types of material, each chipping a tiny segment away from its previous audience.

"Narrowcasting" is one of those unfortunate, instant-cliche words that, nonetheless, describes exactly what is going on. If the networks provide "*broad*casting" for the majority, "*narrow*casting" is for the minority. For example, opera attracts legions of enthusiasts—people who usually are willing to spend $15, $25 or more to see a production. Unfortunately, there are not many of these people, so opera is not an element of network television. In fact, opera is rarely found on public broadcast stations, and potential opera-goers living in smaller cities have to enjoy it on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

With two-way television and 100-plus station receivers, opera fans can enjoy their passion several times a week. With high-quality stereo optical ("laser") videodiscs, opera fans will be able to see and hear their favorites whenever they want.

The same is true with other forms of entertainment that presently do not attract sufficient audience to make it on network or public television with any regularity: all types of jazz, ballet, even punk rock.

Better still, the fact that enthusiasts of these types of entertainment will have access to them will encourage others to get involved. Being community based, cable television can provide opportunities for local opera, ballet, rock and jazz groups et al. to perform for the public, get feedback, improve their techniques and, hopefully, gain wider exposure.

This capability will be even more profound for community and scholastic groups. Instead of performing "Virginia Woolf" in the high school auditorium—or, more likely, in addition to the high school auditorium—community theater can perform over the cable community access station and reach the entire town.

Local versions of *The Tonight Show* can and will spring up, offering hometown singers, comedians and politicians the opportunity to gain city-wide exposure. Candidates for municipal offices will be able to meet the people via television, debate each other, and learn the public's opinions through the feedback buttons on the two-way cable box. With home video cameras, television phone-in shows will be even more impressive than their radio counterparts.

Games—be it chess, checkers, or Space Invaders—can be operated on a community level, with winners of month-long competitions going on to regional contests, and eventually on to state, national and even world-wide competitions. Audience participation on game shows will take on a whole different meaning.

But even that is only the beginning.

If—or more likely when—an interlock devise can be perfected to prevent ballot-stuffing, people can do their voting from the privacy and

convenience of their own living rooms, if the more savvy politicians ever sit still for it.

More than a dozen channels can be set aside for shoppers. Realtors no doubt will want to showcase new homes on television, and people interested in buying a new house will be able to preview via television. Credit card holders with cable television and a telephone will be able to view and order all types of goods—fashions, stereo systems, even the latest in video technology. Orders might be taken through the talk-back capability of two-way cable.

Most cable outlets already offer news and weather print-outs. With two-way cable and the international networks of computer systems and libraries, virtually everything that appears on the printed page can be called up for the home screen. The system is called, variously, "teletext" and "videotext," and it is so important this magazine is devoting a three-issue series to the subject.

Of course, "teletext" can be offered on optical videodisc systems. Since viewers can freeze-frame any one "picture" without wearing out the videodisc, and the more upscale models will have instant-access ability to any one specific frame, the entire *Encyclopedia Brittanica* can be offered on one side of an optical (laser-system) videodisc. In fact, since the optical videodisc can offer 54,000 different "pages" of information per disc, home historians can purchase a 100-year run of The New York *Times* on a set of less than four dozen discs, and probably will pay around $500.00 for the opportunity (that is five hundred 1980 dollars, of course).

This may be hard to believe, but a library containing one million books can be compressed into less than 6,000 optical videodiscs. Those one million books can be stored on five 15-foot shelves, each slighly more than one foot apart.

You can put every book ever published in your own closet. Yes, even the dirty ones.

Reading books on television can be difficult, although it will be a boon to those hard-of-seeing who happen to own a wide-screen projection television system. However, we are only one major technological breakthrough away from making videobooks practical.

For some years now, a number of companies have been working on the development of "thin" television sets—less than one inch thick. Several researchers have been able to come up with prototype models in the neighborhood of three inches in diagonal, black and white, the more proficient of which using liquid crystals similar to those found in inexpensive pocket calculators.

These thin television sets will allow you to turn an entire wall of your apartment or home into a giant television screen, with a picture quality far better than that of wide-screen projection systems. A single cable will come out from the corner of the screen and lead to your cable tuner, video cassette and/or disc player, home computer, or (most likely) video switcher. Of course, such thin sets will be available in every size, including several hand-held models.

When they perfect a thin television, probably using liquid crystals, measuring approximately seven inches diagonally, the publishing industry will no longer need paper. Instead, a video card backed with a magnetic tape-like coating will be inserted into the lightweight hand-held set, which will be slightly wider than your average paperback book. You will be able to read any book on television anywhere you could have read a paperback, except, of course, the bathtub.

This is the only logical solution to the massive paper shortage. Publishers will print promotional literature in order to "sell" the book, and will supply bookdealers with encoded master tapes which will be used to make magnetic video cards. In other words, if you want a copy of the latest Stephen King thriller, you will go to a bookstore (or possibly to a vending machine) and buy the book on a video card that will be imprinted on the spot, in seconds.

This particularly will be useful to magazine publishers. These days, a magazine publisher often has to print at least three magazines for every two copies—or sometimes one—he or she sells on the newsstands. With video cards, magazine publishers only have to print re-usable masters, and newsstands will be supplying their customers the latest issues on the spot. Readers with credit cards and home video card printing machines will be able to get the latest issues over the telephone or over cable television. Publishers will be able to send out subscription copies at the current rate of regular one-ounce first-class mail. Packrats, historians and hobbiests will be able to order back-copies off of old master tapes, kept by the publisher and at various central periodical libraries.

By inserting the videobook or videomagazine card into a special print-out machine and cuing up the proper location, readers will be able to obtain a paper print-out—a facsimile—of any page or section they so desire. Eventually, books and magazines can be offered over special encoded cable lines, transmitted over cable television or telephone directly to the print-out machine.

Of course, the *Playboy* centerfold will suffer, but the price of magazines and books will stabilize and, possibly even go down. The price of paper certainly will plummet.

Indeed, paper for the office will be somewhat less important, as video technology takes over there as well. Already, letters are being transmitted over telephone lines by electronic reproduction machines—video technology will do this a lot faster, and with greater reproduction quality.

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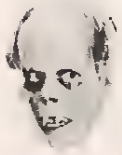

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can be stored on one videodisc, then 54,000 invoices, letters, catalog pages and the like can be stored on videodisc as well. Such discs will be cheaper than microfilm, be more accessable with instant search capabilities, and take up less storage space. As a matter of fact, the Pioneer company, which plans on introducing its Laserdisc optical videodisc player in a few months, has been making industrial videodisc machines for some time now.

With home computers and two-way cable technology, many people will be able to work at home instead of coming down to the office. Meetings can be held via television with home cameras, legal documents can be viewed across the country, most secretarial work can be accomplished via two-way . . . the possibilities are endless. As those of us who watch television commercials know, with video technology and computer-access, many types of information, including medical and legal, can be transmitted instantly. Lawyers will be able to compress entire legal libraries running into the hundreds of books onto two or three optical videodiscs.

Even if one per cent of the population will be able to work at home or at extra-office work centers, the fuel savings will be substantial. If shoppers shift as little as 5% of their purchases over to cable television, an additional fuel saving will be realized. If people go out to see fewer movies, there will be yet another saving of fuel.

This is not to say we will become a nation of homebodies, although, admittedly, the potential is there. No matter how big the television screen gets and how good the stereo sound becomes, people are still going to want to go out to see plays and hear music peformed live.

As we hear all the time—usually from network vice-presidents—radio did not kill movies and television did not kill radio. However, it is important to realize these advances did alter their predecessors, and video technology will have its impact as well.

We already are seeing a trend towards bigger movies—films so big they can not be contained by the television screen. You have to go out to the theater in order to get the full enjoyment from "big" movies like *Star Wars* and *Superman*. We will be seeing more and more movies made in 70mm with multi-track Dolby sound, and we will be going out to see them, and we probably will be paying more for the privilege.

This will not stifle creativity and production—quite the opposite. Filmmakers with a less-than-commercial concept, by today's terms, are likely to find their audience through cable television and home video tape and disc. We are a nation of over 225 million people, and that covers a lot of tastes and desires. In the past, television has met only a fraction of them.

Those days are gone forever, folks. ■

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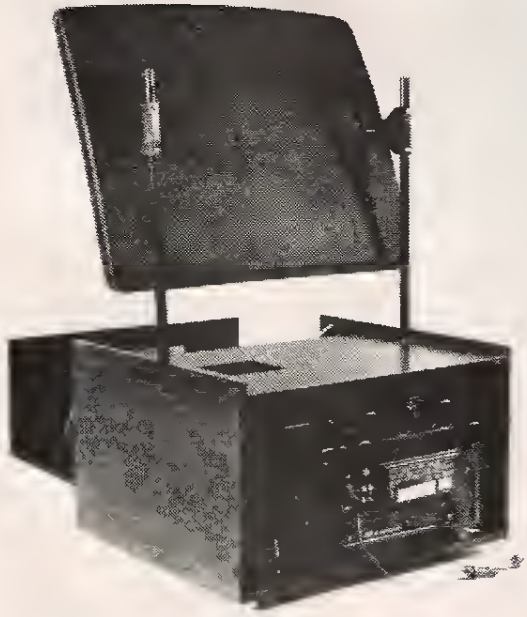

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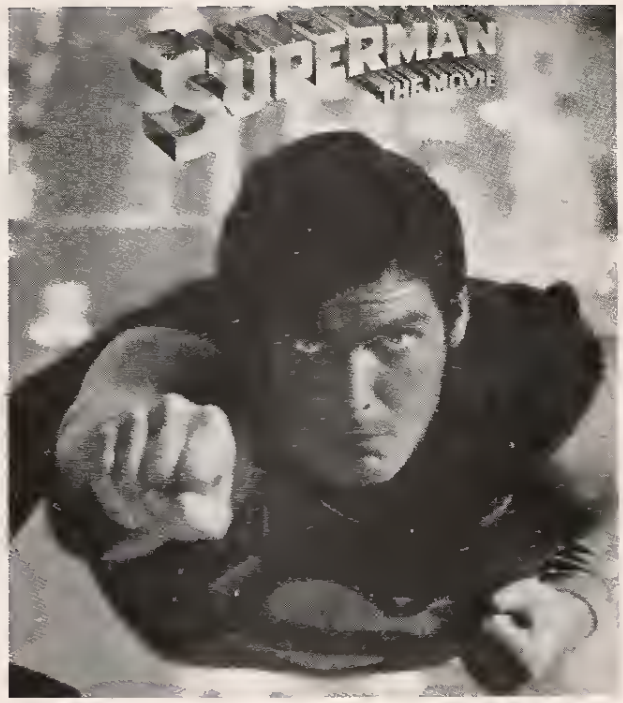

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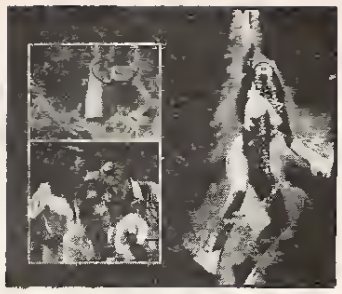

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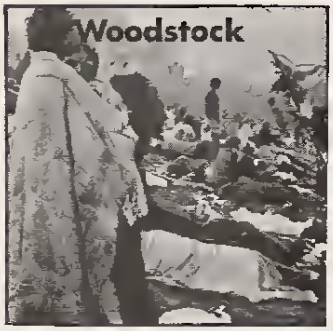

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STOP ACTION FOOTBALL

Instant replay is the wave of sport's future. So why is everybody resisting it?

SPORTS by Marilyn Ferdinand

ABOUT THIS TIME EACH YEAR, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS are overcome by a strange compulsion. Passions run high, voices are raised and protests are heard.

Yes, the football season is upon us, bringing with it the usual assortment of big plays, broken plays, broken bones and just enough controversy to keep the fans and the media thoroughly engrossed. Each week they garret themselves in front of their TV sets and match wits with the refs, tele-eyeball to eyeball, to come up with the right calls.

At least a few times each year the camera's eye—with its slow-motion, stop-action, instant replay vision—sees better. Thus, each season the National Football League is faced with the incessant pressure to use instant replay in its officiating.

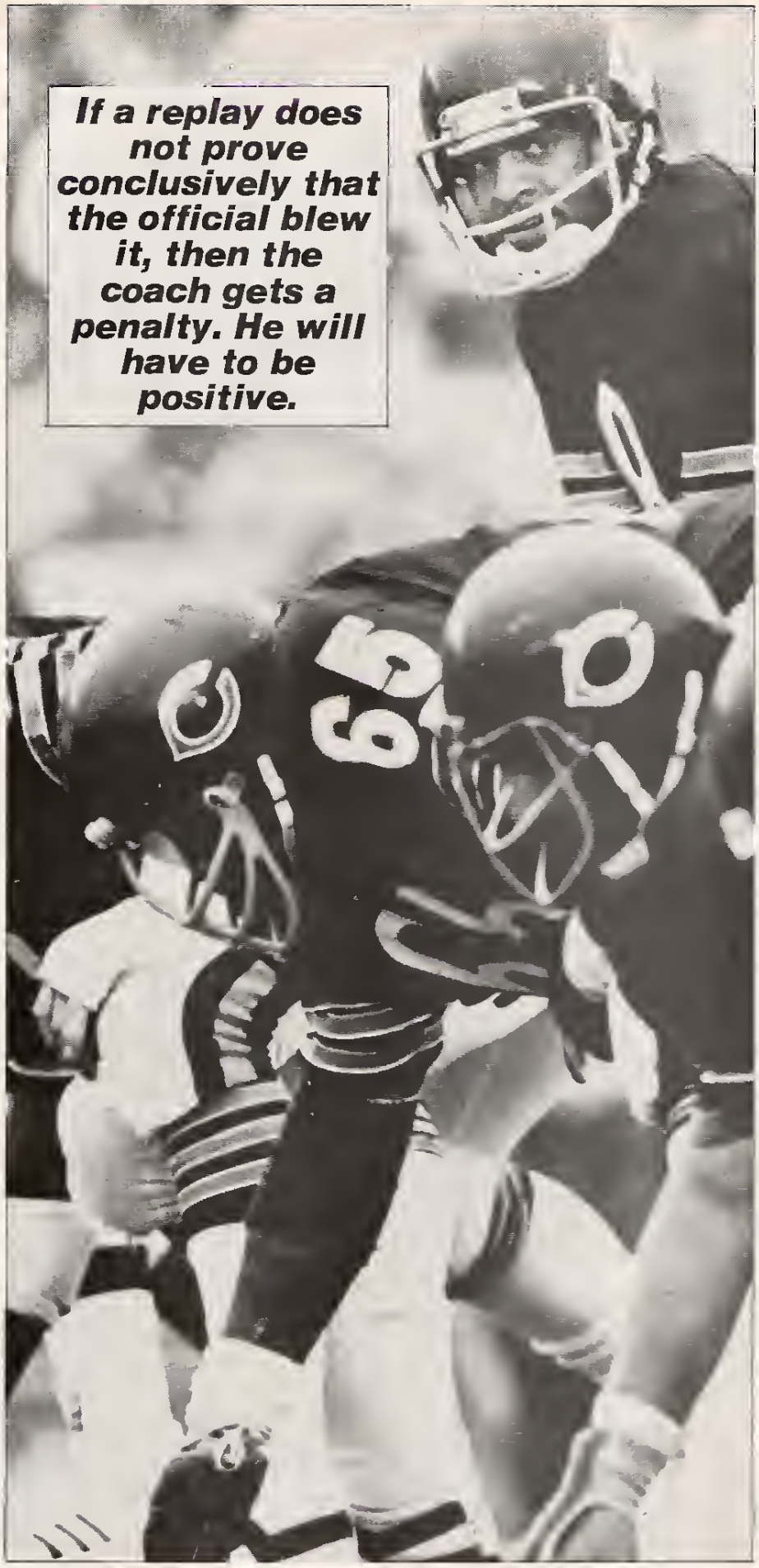
And why not? Today, the marriage between mankind and machines is a familiar and mostly congenial one, and certainly one that the sports world has not turned a cold shoulder to. In fact, officials for such sports as track and horse racing have already utilized instant replay to help improve their competitions. Even the conservative, tradition-bound Wimbledon tennis tournament now features electronically wired chalklines. Thus, to the technology-conscious public the NFL's current indifference to the use of instant replay seems downright reactionary.

But, it would be wrong to mistake the NFL's inaction for indifference. The question has been under consideration for a number of years. (The NFL did, in fact, do a very limited technical study of instant replay during seven games of the 1978 pre-season.) And, at least one prominent member of the sports community, sportscaster and former Chicago Bears great Johnny Morris, has come up with what he feels is a tenable system.

To the technology-conscious public, the NFL's indifference to the use of instant replay seems downright reactionary.

"My plan, which I've proposed for three or four years, is that they should allow a coach in playoff games one or two appeals if he is really convinced that the referee blew it. When he calls for that appeal they would have an official up in the pressbox all the time who would look at the existing replays. If the replay does not show conclusively one way or the other, the play would stand. If the replay shows that the referee was right, the call and the play stand. But, if they happen to get the right angle, where it is proved conclusively that the official blew it, and they've got it on a replay, then they change the call.

"If it doesn't prove conclusively, or if the official was right, then the coach gets a penalty. He should have to really be sure to take the risk of making that one appeal, so I think it's got to be a really major issue." In this way, Morris feels that the pace of the game could be preserved while at the same time achieving fairness for the teams who have been able to make it into the playoffs. And, the likelihood of television having the right replay would be greatly enhanced because of the larger number of cameras used during playoff and championship games



If a replay does not prove conclusively that the official blew it, then the coach gets a penalty. He will have to be positive.

Photos courtesy of Chicago Bears

It is also entirely possible that using instant replay could, in fact, cut down on the efficiency of the officiating through psychological intimidation. Grossman feels the officials could not be too happy about electronic interference "because I've proven most of the time in the replays that they're pretty darn good. I would never want an official tohesitate on a call because he's worried about what the replay's going to show. If your work is judged immediately and your decision reversed because it was a bad call, that's going to affect the rest of your game. The players are kind of cruel out there on the field. You know they'd never let him forget it. Psyching is a very heavy thing."

Art McNally contends that it would not bother his officials at all, because their philosophy is to get every call right. And, if the rules committee felt that instant replay would be best for the game, then the officials would work with it to the best of their abilities.

It is apparent that the replay issue does strike an indignant chord in him. McNally feels that his officials are "better now than they've ever been. We're convinced that they're accurate in excess of 95 per cent of the time. I'm talking not only about the calls that they make, but their mechanics, their coverage of the field and so on. But you have one play that's nationally televised where there is some semblance of doubt, or perhaps there is an absolute error. Everything else is forgotten."

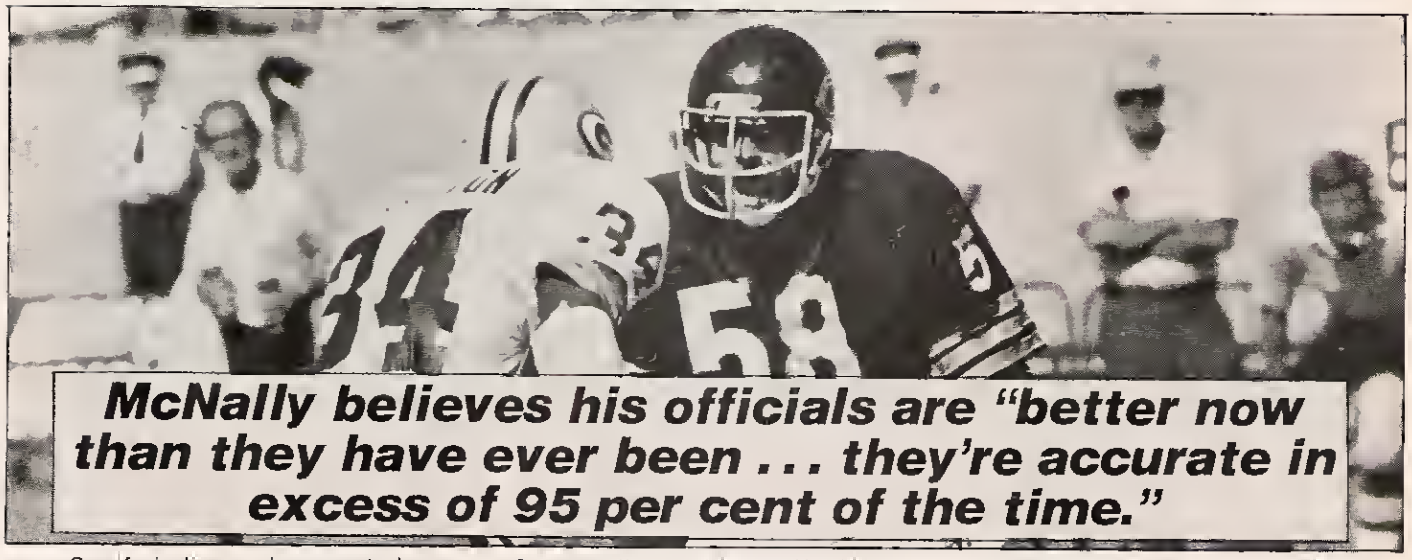
In addition to the above problems there are those which television itself creates, in particular the clamoring for instant replay. Says Chet Forte, director of ABC's *Monday Night Football*, "I think fans overemphasize replays anyway. I think it's one thing that television has overdone. Most of the time television is trying to prove that they've got the replay, and I think that's nonsense. People are used to seeing it, though."

Then, too, television stands to lose if officials were to get involved with instant replay officiating. Forte contends that it would "put a lot of pressure on television, because sometimes we're not going to have it. Sometimes we have technical difficulties. Sometimes we're not isolated on the correct man. Television is now coming out looking like a bum."

It may not matter to the networks, however, because there is very little chance they would be willing to get involved in any way with the officiating. The feeling at the networks is that television exists to provide entertainment to its viewing audience, period. That puts the burden of setting up a

replay system directly on the shoulderpads of the NFL at a cost possibly as high as $50 million. Would it be worth it?

"Pete Rozelle (Commissioner of the NFL) doesn't think so," says Johnny Morris. "He doesn't think anything's worth $50 million when he's got a game going now that's costing him nothing. He'd rather have a few mistakes and a few big arguments, with all the publicity involved, than spend $50 million to try to cut down two or three arguments a year. He doesn't want his officials to screw up, but he would rather have that than get involved in a whole big expense and get into all these cameras and take away what he calls 'the human element' of the game. And, he's the prime mover of why they're not doing it."



McNally believes his officials are "better now than they have ever been . . . they're accurate in excess of 95 per cent of the time."

So, if studies and suggested systems exist, why hasn't the NFL done anything about instant replay?

Well, it is not as simple as it sounds. The league finds itself enmeshed in a web of conflicting goals and technical difficulties that make the instant replay issue far from clear-cut to those who would be charged with implementing it. "We obviously are interested in doing anything we can to improve any aspects of our game, and certainly officiating is one of the aspects of football," Val Pinchbeck, Jr., Director of Broadcasting for the NFL, told *Video Action*, "but in any instant replay system, how do you limit it?"

This has been one of the major stumbling blocks to a fair and practical instant replay rule, in part because there is a tendency in the NFL to want to make rule changes apply to everything. That, to the NFL's mind, is what is wrong with Johnny Morris' system and, ultimately, what is wrong with instant replay in general.

One of the first problems that comes to mind is which infractions to apply to an instant replay check. The type of plays that would best be suited to instant replay are those which could be isolated easily, where there are not a lot of bodies jostling and interfering with the camera angles—sideline pass plays, for instance. But, is it fair to say that a replay can be used in one type of play and not in another? All infractions can affect the outcome of a game, and it is generally acknowledged that there is some type of infraction on every play, usually holding. Thus, if they were to scrutinize each play, checking for every type of penalty, it would complicate the game to no end.

For instance, the constant checking would slow the game down. Sandy Grossman, a director for CBS Sports, comments, "It's just a matter of recuing the machine and looking at it in slow motion—you're talking maybe 30 seconds. But, the problem is if it's a very close call, it could take a few minutes to study the thing."

Thus, not only would time be added to an already lengthy game, but the tempo of the game would be broken. This could hurt the momentum of the teams, and consequently, hurt the game, not to mention the fans in the stands on a cold and snowy November day in Green Bay.

Further, replaying could reveal infractions other than the one being questioned. Then, the officials become faced with the decision of whether to change part or all of the call. Art McNally, Supervisor of Officials for the NFL, observes that, "the bone of contention may be on a catch on the sideline. But, what happens if, when you go back you find out that, well, he really did make the catch, but that the left tackle for the offensive team was holding? He committed a foul, and the officials, because of the movement of all these players couldn't see it. But we see it on television. Really, when you get down to it, what you should do is wipe out the catch and penalize the offensive team ten yards for holding." Thus, the reason for using instant replay in the first place—to clarify certain, specific actions on the field—gets lost in an entire field of motion.

Pete Rozelle may be the prime mover, but it stands to reason that the league owners would vote it down every year unless they had grave reservations of their own. After all, they're the ones who lose money if their teams are put out of contention by a miscall. The fans may get outraged, but they are known for having short memories. Morris recalls "there was one when I was playing with the Bears, a real big controversy, but who remembers that now? It sure didn't hurt the NFL."

So, it appears that the "ayes" of instant replay will have to wait, perhaps a long time. But, the controversy will continue and will likely heat up. Sandy Grossman is starting to use a new technique which would be able to enlarge a picture that is less than full-screen. And Chet Forte has added a 13th camera to *Monday Night Football* on the far side of the field which should be able to catch action that previously faced away from the cameras. These innovations may not change the NFL's position, but it certainly could increase the pressure to experiment with instant replay.

"Both the commissioner and the league owners' attitude has been that the door is never closed," reports McNally, "because they're very progressive and they realize that the time may come when a number of these things can be alleviated or maybe some part of the game could use instant replay. They'll keep looking, they'll keep searching." ■

NEWSLINE

(Continued from Page 14)

access to 16 cable channels directly from police headquarters. Chief Kirkbride can flash a written message or break in with an audio alert. The system has already been used to broadcast a tornado warning ... on its first day of operation.

We'll Fight 'Em At The Borders ...

Dire consequences were predicted for the fate of "free television" in the face of the cable invasion at the 25th meeting of the Broadcasters Promotion Association held this summer in Montreal. Speakers from the broadcast industry predicted the growth of pay television could quite possibly lead to an end to the current system of free TV.

Not surprisingly, one of the loudest voices raised against cable television belonged to the president of one of the Three Sisters of American broadcasting, James Duffy of ABC-TV. Cable could quite easily "begin to erode the free TV system before the public fully realized it," Duffy said.

The CATV encroachment into formerly sacred network television territory has already begun according to Duffy; ABC-TV's chief competitor in the bidding for the broadcast rights to the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles was not another network but a cable system. And it will not be long before the nets and various CATV systems begin to lock horns regularly over the rights to major events and feature films. The light-heavyweight boxing match between Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran, he pointed out to the audience, was only available to paying audiences in theaters and over pay television, marking the first time such an event had been broadcast this way.

Al Johnson, the president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, played on Canada's strong sense of national pride in his speech condemning the growth of CATV. Fully three-quarters of Canadian homes are capable of receiving cable, further adding to the glut it made in the U.S.A. programming coming into the country. "There is a danger that our broadcasting industry will simply import all the new services from the United States and Canadian programs will be swamped in the process," Johnson said.

It is obvious that cable television will do little to help relations with our neighbors to the north. In fact, it seems as if the first shots have already been fired in what promises to be a most interesting border war.

But First A Word From Our Sponsor ... But First The Same Word From The Same Sponsor ... But First Yet The Same ...

Uptown residents of Manhattan want to see Ted Turner's Cable News Network, but it is going to take a fight with City Hall to make it happen. Teleprompter, one of the two cable television systems sharing the lucrative Manhattan market, would love to give its subscribers what they want but they are caught between a rock and the hardheads at New York's Mayor's Office.

Teleprompter/Manhattan *had* planned to begin running the newly formed all news cable network on June 1 on their Channel A, but the city had other ideas, not to mention the rules of the game on *their* side. Channel A carries programming from the city, on their WNYC-TV system. What is upsetting to both Teleprompter and uptown residents alike is the fact that much of the Channel A programming is triplicated, available on Channel 3 as well as the city's PBS station, WNET.

But it is a tough break for Manhattanites above 86th Street. New York's office of telecommunications is telling disappointed Teleprompter subscribers that the aforementioned cable channels are the city's to do with as the city sees fit. If New Yorkers in uptown want to watch CNN, they will, for the time being, just have to head downtown, to where Manhattan Cable subscribers receive the service.

Which just goes to prove that in New York, there is very often a fine line between getting what you want and being left out in the cold.

City Hall Vs. City Council Vs. FCC

Of the Big Three television markets in this country, only the city of Chicago remains unwired for cable television, but if Mayor Jane Byrne has her way that will change very soon. If, however, the Chicago City Council has *its* way, the change will be a little longer in coming.

Early last June, the Mayor appointed a nine-member committee made up of city aldermen to draft legislation that would allow cable into Chicago within 60 to 90 days. Her reasons are simple: "We anticipate that a substantial amount of revenue will accrue to the city from the taxes that will be imposed for franchise privileges." Still, a number of aldermen are skeptical of Her Honor's motives, as well as the ability of the Council to move so quickly on a measure that, ultimately, will lead to an estimated $600,000,000 worth of wiring running throughout the city.

It is mostly Chicago's track record involving big money deals that worry independent aldermen and the cable television industry. CATV has only recently been the subject of massive deregulation by the FCC and insiders fear that a scandal in the industry could undo all the recent good. And with things moving so fast in Chicago, many feel that a major civic graft scandal is very likely indeed.

Alderman Edward Vrdolyak, head of the City Council committee on CATV, doubts that scandal would or could happen. City employees—and that includes aldermen—are prohi-

bited from investing in any cable companies. The city will also make disclosure of all investors and officers of companies bidding for the Chicago franchises mandatory. Such regulations do little to calm the fears of the cable industry, who know all too well the ways around and through the rules and fear that an enterprising alderman might be able to find his/her way just as easily.

So cable television in Chicago is still up in rather than on the air for the time being. Stay tuned for further developments—although you probably should not plan on watching for results on CATV in the Windy City for a while yet.

BROADCAST

From Yogi Bear To Yogi, Bare

It was a typical Saturday morning in Atlanta, Georgia. The kiddies were up with the sun, planted before the television with their sugar-coated cereals to watch their favorite Saturday morning cartoon shows. It is usually pretty standard fare that is

presented for their entertainment on WSB-TV, the *Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Hour*, followed by the *Globetrotter-Godzilla Comedy Hour*. But on the morning of July 26, in the break between the two programs, the kids were given a little something extra—a quick one and one half second glimpse of a naked woman.

WSB-TV vice president and general manager Fred Barber is at a loss to explain how a picture of a well-endowed young lady, naked from the waist up, made it onto the air in the middle of a Georgia Forestry Commission commercial. Station policy forbids the bringing of any "lewd or suggestive material" into the master control area, but that obviously did not deter some imaginative station employee from his fun.

It is unlikely that the episode will ever be repeated, especially after Barber finds the offending technicians. Still, one cannot help wondering just what future incidents would do to the ratings—it would get a lot more adults up early on Saturdays.

After all, Bugs Bunny was never this much fun when we were kids.

The Two Faces Of Public Television

PBS
PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

We all know the stations in the Public Broadcasting Network are forbidden by law to accept advertising, right? PBS is supported by funding from private and corporate foundations and donations from the viewing public, as well as monies paid to it from our tax dollars by the government. So when we switch on the Public Broadcasting station in our hometown we can sit back and enjoy hours upon hours of commercial free viewing, right?

Well—yes and no.

PBS has been lobbying recently for permission to replace the plain-type announcements at the end of corporate-sponsored programs with the more recognizable logos of the aforementioned corporations. That would, in effect, mean that at the very least your tax dollars would go towards paying for what amounts to corporate advertising on PBS.

If that were not enough, several PBS stations have started distributing *The Dial, the New Magazine of Public Broadcasting*, a monthly publication that will carry news and listings of what is on Public Television—*and* paid advertising. And the main thrust of *The Dial's* campaign to potential advertisers? "If you could advertise on public TV, would you?"

The Incredible Hulk Meets Swan Lake

Dissatisfied with the treatment their characters have received at the

hands of production companies and animation houses over the years, the Marvel Comics Group—publishers of *Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk* and *Captain America*, among others—have taken matters into their own hands. Henceforth, the comic book company will produce their own live-action and animated features for television and theatrical release, out of the newly formed Marvel Productions Ltd.

David DePatie, formerly president of DePatie-Freleng Enterprises, the producers of the *Pink Panther* cartoon shorts, has been named president of Marvel Productions, with Marvel Comics publisher Stan Lee taking on responsibilities as the company's creative director.

Cadence Industries Corporation, the parent company of Marvel Comics and Productions, has alloted a $250,000 development budget for the fledging production company's first year. Strangely enough, MPL's first project has nothing to do with any of the super-powerful characters to which it owes its existence. Rather, it is to be a 90-minute animated version of the Tchaikovsky ballet, *Swan Lake*, co-produced with the Toei Animation Co. of Japan.

Future productions include animated commercials, adaptations of children's books and a 60-minute animated pilot featuring Spider-Man for ABC-TV's 1981-82 Saturday morning schedule.

SATELLITES

You Don't Have To Leave Home Again!

If you have always hated traveling from one Holiday Inn to another in pursuit of the wild business meeting, you can now loosen your tie, sit

back and relax. The way things are going, you may never have to travel for business again.

Thanks to a satellite hook-up at Holiday Inns across the country, TRW Information Services is now able to offer "tele-conferences" to businesses everywhere. Using the same ground receiving stations employed in bringing cable television into the hotel's guest rooms, Holiday Inn has set up a system of

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115 stations nationwide.

In the first telecast seminar sponsored by TRW, 33 Holiday Inns were linked together for a meeting that reached 2,000 company officers. Delegates at the nationwide meeting were able to talk to one another via a telephone hook-up.

Of course, neither TRW or Holiday Inn have yet to come up with anything to replace those extra added perks that come with out-of-town business meetings. No doubt somebody is already at work developing transistorized expense accounts.

Maybe We Could Disguise It As A Planter . . .?

LEGISLATION

If Rep. L. Richardson Preyer (D.-N.C.) has his way, those of you with unauthorized devices for intercepting subscription telecommunications could spend up to 40 months in the clink and have your bank account set back a quarter million. His proposed legislation—H.R. 7741—would amend the Communications Act to exact harsh retribution on "video pirates" but, get this, *not* the manufacturers of said devices. The measure would go further than punishing owners of "black boxes"—signal descramblers or cable tappers—owners of satellite receptors would also feel the heavy federal hand.

In fact, those with the rather conspicuous parabolic dishes in their back yard for reception of satellite signals would most likely be the hardest hit. While a small indoor black box is relatively easy to hide, the federal knowledge of its existence raises constitutional questions of access and information-gathering, an 11'x16' white dish outside is not exactly easy to camouflage.

"Look, One Of Us Has Got To

While the three major networks are beginning to sweat blood over plummeting Nielson ratings, little word of encouragement is coming form the ad world. Gene Secunda, a J. Walther Thompson senior VP predicts that the satellite-through-cable boom could very well wipe out one of the Three Sisters.

Let's Get It Out Of The Elevators And Into The Home Where It Belongs.

If you happen to be one of those people who is bothered by that non-stop homogenized semi-music that seems to play in just about every supermarket, waiting room

and elevator across the nation, you had best barricade the door against the possible coming invasion.

Thanks to the abundance of communications satellites cluttering up space around the planet these days, there are more than enough channels available to be able to relay Muzak across the nation. And that is precisely what the Muzak Corp. hopes to do starting this fall, according to company chief Edward J. Furman.

But that is not all.

With technology being what it is these days it is highly conceivable that in the very near future Muzak could be transmitted directly into the home on one of the channels of cable television.

Just think. Now you won't have to hang out in strange supermarkets to hear your fave raves from Muzak's greatest hits.

TV SETS BIG AND SMALL

They Project Just The Right Image

A new system of video projection has recently been introduced by Electronic Systems Products, Inc. The Aquastar III B Video Projector has several new features previously unavailable in television projectors, ranging from size and weight—it is not much larger than a small suitcase, weighing in at a mere 78 pounds—to picture brightness.

According to ESP, the Aquastar

delivers a picture that is five times brighter than conventional projectors, thanks to a system of liquid-coupled lens and liquid-cooled tubes. They claim this makes for a better picture, eliminates dust and helps to prolong tube life.

Aquastar is not only being marketed for home use. ESP is touting its projection television—which, incidentally, can be used with screens ranging from four to 20 feet in width—as perfect for industrial and educational uses as well.

How Big Is Big Enough?

Affecionados of larger-than-life television will be happy about Mitsubishi's new color big-screen system, Diamond Vision, which is intended for use in sporting arenas. This year, its dimensions are 20'x28' . . . next year the new, improved model will offer projection space of 25'x33'. This year's model was introduced at the July 8th All-Star Game in L.A.'s Doger Stadium to critical acclaim. In this area the sky, it seems, will truly be the limit.

Set In Our Ways

Sales of VCRs continue to climb against a simultaneous drop in both sales of color and black-and-white television sets. This may be a reflection of less programmed obsoles-

(Continued on Page 71)

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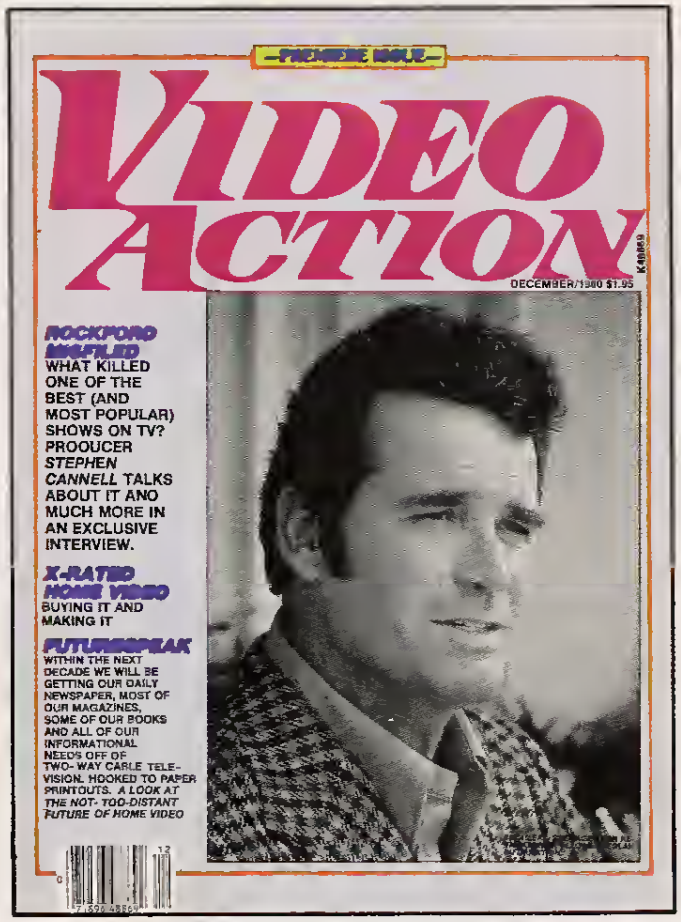

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NOVICE'S GUIDE

Making home tapes can be easier than you think.

IF YOU DREAM OF INCARNATING AS CAPTAIN KIRK IN the ever-expanding universe of video gadgetry, there is hope. Through the viewfinder of a video camera, you can discover all types of strange new worlds, and boldly go where your television set has not gone before. And you do not need Spockian smarts to pull it off.

The camera is an alien being that can expand your vision the way a car expands your mobility. Therefore, you should not approach its acquisition impulsively. Close your eyes and imagine what you would do with a camera—allow all those fantasies to come to the surface. Remember: each fantasy, no matter how wild, is the basis of an expectation which can result in delight with your purchase.

Next, convert your fantasies into realistic settings. If you imagine yourself shooting tapes of wild animals on other planets, translate that into a desire to make tapes of an exotic vacation. Try to imagine how the camera feels. Which hand are you holding it in? How much does it weigh? With which parts of your body are you supporting its weight? How much do you expect the camera to be able to zoom in? Consider the kind of light you think you might be working in.

You will get a mental image of what you think a camera should do. Then it remains to find the camera which meets your expectations.

If you already owns a Super 8 or similar film camera, you will want to know what the differences are between film and video. On the home level, most of the advantages lie with videotape, however, there are three main advantages to film. The Super 8 camera is a bit lighter than a video camera, and not limited in mobility by a cord connected to a tape recording unit. A Super 8 is a single unit, a videotape set-up requires a minimum of two separate pieces of equipment—the camera and a recorder—which can be a burden when taping outside or on vacation.

Videotape is superior in several areas. The camera does not require special additional lighting and, unlike film, adjusts itself in normal light. Video tapes can be erased and reused.

But perhaps most significant is a comparison of footage costs. Excluding equipment, six hours of Super 8 averages $850 to produce, the same amount of video costs as little as $15.95.

Even if you have a large library of films, they need not go to waste since they easily can be transferred to videotape. But more on that later.

If you are to the point where you have decided to go ahead and purchase a video camera, you have two important decisions to make. Are you going to want a portable camera/recorder set-up or a stationary camera for home use exclusively? Secondly, do you want a black and white or color camera?

To answer the portability question, go back to your fantasies. Did you see yourself going out and shooting tapes or did you see yourself doing more person-to-person interviewing? If you are thinking principally of using the camera at home to tape family and friends, you may get by more cheaply buying a camera and a tripod and hooking yourself up to your current recorder.

If you decide you want mobility, be prepared to lay out significant bucks for a portable videocassette recorder as well as for the camera. There are no cameras on the market today with built-in video recorders.

The weight of the mobile gear should be considered. The average portable recorder weighs about 13 pounds and the average camera about eight—that is 21 pounds of gear, though lighter equipment is available. If you are unsure about your physical fitness, ask your doctor whether you can safely carry such a load for long periods of time. 21 pounds can get pretty heavy on a hot day.

Video camera technology is not expected to change much in coming years, although cameras may become lighter. Ron Anderson, seasoned salesperson for Leisure-Tronics in Glenview, Illinois, does not see much technological change down the pike. "Cameras are going to stay the same. The only thing they can really do to a camera is maybe ex-

(Continued on Page 68)

You can now keep a video diary of your life, including everything from the birth of your child to (depending on your sensibilities), his conception.

ARTICLE by Ann DeLarye

TRIPLE X

Prices are going down, quality is improving, but sales are falling off, at least percentage-wise.

Had this been written three years ago the first two words would have been "CAVEAT EMPTOR!" This old admonition to take extreme care that you receive the quality you expect you pay for was particularly significant when "adult-oriented" video cassettes first invaded the market.

You might already know what we're talking about if you were one of those hapless folks who snuck into a porno shop and plunked down anywhere for $100 to $200 and sometimes even $500 to be the first on your block to possess your own print of *Deep Throat* . . . only to discover yourself the proud owner of a pirated fifth-generation moving daguerreotype with a sound-track reminiscent of an antique 78 RPM record played on a Victrola.

In those days, it was not only the performers in the presentations who were getting screwed.

A survey conducted by Time/Life a year-and-one-half ago found porno outselling "straight" video cassettes three-to-one. This was due to the fact that legitimate video porno by sheer bulk and number of available titles had a considerable edge over its more staid competition. Indeed, at one point it comprised close to 100 per cent of what was available in the pre-recorded market.

The porno video producers are now playing hardball with the libraries of Warners, MGM, Paramount and MCA.

But those days are over and you, the consumer, benefit.

Since the major motion picture studios opened up their libraries to the video cassette market one of capitalism's interesting mechanisms has come into play: the sink or swim of increasingly stiff competition. The comparitively small video producers are now playing hardball with the libraries of Paramount, Columbia Pictures, Warner Brothers, MGM, Universal, 20th Century Fox, and Allied Artists—and the large-muscled marketing arms of these entities.

"Mens' smoker movies"—albeit some well-produced men's smokers—are now competing with such fare as *Casablanca, Superman, The Sting, Citizen Kane, Gerald McBoing Boing,* and *Brian's Song.* This competitive kink in the market has resulted in several benefits to the purchaser of sexually explicit video material.

First of all, prices have gone down. While $100 is still not an uncommon price for popular full-length features, prices ranging from $75 to $85 are becoming more evident. Many luxuriously produced "shorts"—programs running about an hour in length—are selling in the $50-$60 range.

The quality is better, both in production values and reproduction technique. While most remain video reproductions from film masters of movies previously released in theatres, several producers are releasing programs intended exclusively for the home market while others are simultaneously releasing presentations as cassettes for the home and as films for the theater. Many of these cassettes are *not* converted from a film master. A generation is saved and the final quality is improved.

This over-all improvement in reproduction has virtually eliminated the problem of piracy-for-profit and the accompanying scourge of inferior quality.

One of the more interesting entries

Overview by BILL MARTIN

Illustration by Mark Ricketts

in the "for home only" market is *Electric Blue*, a regularly-issued video magazine devoted to matters erotic. We can expect to see a proliferation of similar cassette magazines, as well as other tele-periodicals devoted to a myriad of subjects, to grow in ratio to the burgeoning VCR market.

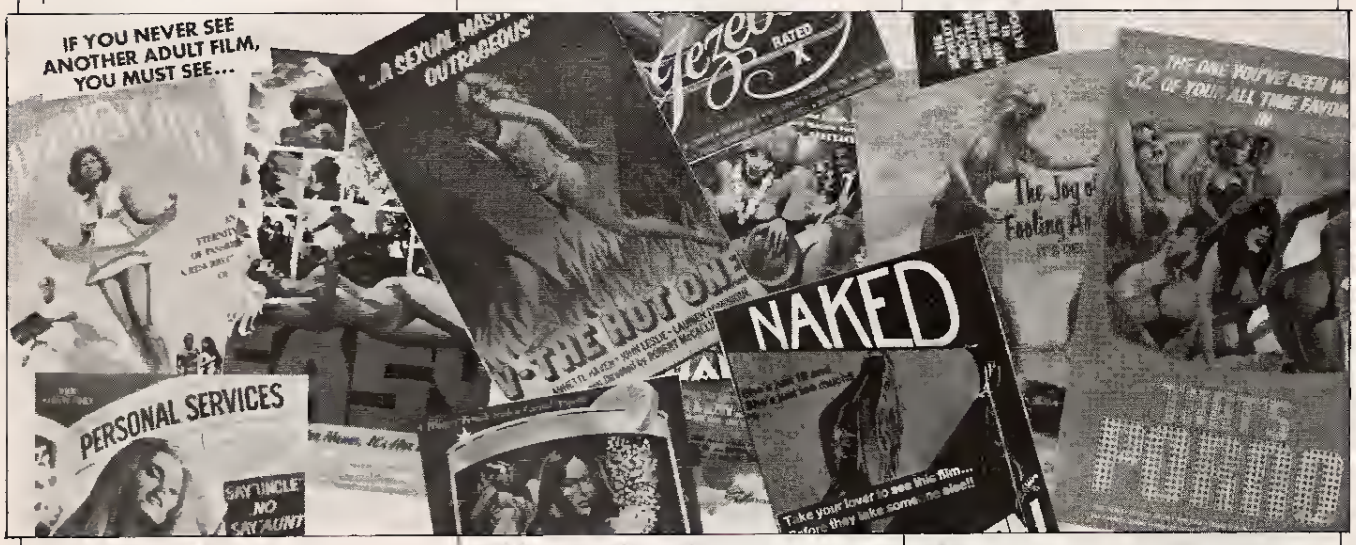
Producers and distributers of adult fare will have to offer more and varied presentations in order to maintain their current piece of the pie. They not only have to compete with erotica from the large studios (*Emmanuelle* from Paramount and *The Story of O* from Allied Artists are two examples) but they must break through a substantial consumer trend to own only two or three representative skin flicks. Everyone with a VCR, it seems, owns *Deep Throat*, *The Devil in Miss Jones*, and *Debbie Does Dallas*. Hardcore collectors, while forming a substantial part of the cassette-buying public, are by no means the majority. It appears that many consumers have a curiosity about video porn that is satiated with the purchase of only a few such items. After all, the content is essentially the same. There may be eight million stories in the naked city but many of them are redundant. Proprietors of video shops and adult book stores I have talked with all report that sales of adult-only cassettes are now down by as much as 75 per cent from even a year ago.

To offset this trend, many X-rated presentations are being made with quality and entertainment beyond the carnal in mind. A large number of the video erotica currently available are expensively-produced and offer lush scenery, international settings, gorgeous and committed performers, and interesting story lines accompanied by competent acting.

Of course, this is not to imply that the market is a total consumer's—or even a voyeur's—paradise. Far from it. Though the threat of inferior pirated merchandise has been dealt a critical blow by the growth of the legitimate market, low-budget low-rent cold-action drek unfortunately is in great abundance. And the proposition of spending $50 to $100 for what might turn out to be a basement donkey show is definitely a disheartening one, but there are several ways to circumvent this hurtle.

- Buy from a reputable business—after engaging in some competitive pricing analysis—which offers a return policy for inferior reproduction.
- Many video stores now offer viewing booths in which products can be sampled before purchase. This is an idea whose time has come. Patronizing dealers who offer this service will help to diminish possible dissatisfaction.
- Some theaters now sell X-rated cassettes next to the popcorn and candy bars. These cassettes are usually of the film currently being shown. This offers the potential buyer a preview before money changes hands. Again, if the price is reasonable and the management offers a return guarantee for technically inferior merchandise, the theater can be a good place to make your purchase.
- Mail-order buying of sexually-oriented material can present some problems. Several distributors and retailers of adult video do not send their materials through the mails to various states in the union for fear of potentially expensive litigation instigated by zealous local prosecutors. Confiscation of sexually explicit material at the point of entry into the U.S. is also not uncommon when it is sent from foreign countries. This presently does not apply to cassettes since Europe has yet to become overly involved in the market. You also face the more common consumer hazards of mail-order purchase: prolonged length of delivery—or even a failure of delivery—due to dealer or postal inefficiency, as well as possible damage in transit. While most mail-order businesses are efficient and above-board legitimate concerns, still, buyer beware.
- Read reviews of films prior to pruchase. Many men's magazines offer such commentary on X-rated video fare. A good reviewer can warn you away from the bad and cheap and turn you on to quality products.

(Editor's note: Video Action will initiate a consumers' review column in the next issue. We will be looking at and discussing all video merchandise, placing an emphasis on new releases, including X-rated material.)



At this point in time many producers are anxiously eying the potential of video discs. But like practically everyone else, they remain on "hold" while the various noncompatible systems battle it out for predominance in the market.

VIDEO ACTION recently attended the Consumer Electronics Show and spoke to many of the producers of home video porn about the future of erotic discs (this was a somewhat difficult task since many of the booths were staffed by scantilly-clad porno actresses who were surrounded by a sea of drooling polyestered electronics salesmen). They admitted great interest in discs but showed equally great reticence in investing large amounts of time and money in a system which may go the way of another greatly-touted new technology of recent times: quadrophonic sound.

While discs, particularly the laser-/optical variety, offer the best reproduction quality, anxious X-rated fans will have to wait a spell until X-discs are offered for general consumption. When the day comes that *Deep Throat* and the rest of the voluminous pornographic armamentarium are translated to discs you will enjoy an additional benefit to the high-quality reception. The discs will be substantially cheaper than tapes. You can expect the prices of cassettes to reflect this competition.

VIDEO ACTION will keep you informed of the developments in the X-rated field. See you next month. ■

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Rockford Files

Exclusive Interview: STEPHEN CANNELL

Creative Producer of some of the best shows on television

As far as the world of commercial television is concerned, Stephen J. Cannell is a rare animal; he is the man who brought class to the lowest-common-denominator world of action programming. The producer, writer, and often creator of such well-received shows as *Tenspeed and Brown Shoe*, *Black Sheep Squadron*, *The Rockford Files* and *Toma*, Cannell has proven time after time cop and action shows need not be mindless fodder for hypnotized vidiots.

Video Action's New York Correspondent Steve Mitchell recently interviewed Cannell as the producer was preparing his project for the new season.

VIDEO ACTION: How did you get your start in television?

CANNELL: That takes us back about ten years. Most of my family was in the furniture business and I was not fond of that. I'd majored in writing in college, so I started doing a lot of writing in the evenings and on weekends. I put myself on a very strict time budget because one of the big problems in writing is developing discipline. Without that, you've got nothing.

V.A.: Absolutely.

CANNELL: I tried to put in two to three hours every day, even while I was holding down a job for my dad. And at least one full day every weekend. I wrote that way for two years and sold nothing. I piled up an incredible amount of stuff. Most of the really good ideas I've had I've even-

STEPHEN CANNELL

INTERVIEW by Steve Mitchell

Robert Conrad does his short-lived* Baretta *imitation in* Duke *playing Duke Ramsey (no relation to Hec Ramsey).

tually sold to somebody else or to myself.

I was writing films and television because as a writer living in Los Angeles I felt that was the biggest market and I figured if I was going to make it as a writer I'd better aim at the largest target. It was a very competitive field, but it also eats up an incredible amount of material.

At the time, I was 24 years old and the television industry was run primarily by older men. After I got an agent I started to get into producers' offices. The minute I walked through the door they'd see this 24-year-old kid and they were used to men twice my age. Most of the really productive writers in television back then—and it wasn't that long ago—were guys out of radio who had moved into television and were 50 or 60 years old. The producers didn't know how old I was when I made the appointment.

By that time, I had quit my father's business and was trying to make it as a freelance writer. I figured I had about six months in which to make it, so I worked at writing for eight hours every day and, when I would get a meeting, which happened like three or four times a year, I would spend two weeks just getting ready for the meeting. I worked so that when I went in there I knew I wasn't going to blow it. I was going to make an impression on this guy.

V.A.: You were working on your pitch, so to speak.

CANNELL: No, not on my pitch. On my story. I would work out very developed plots. One of the really strange things I discovered when I got to the other side of the producer's desk is that most writers don't know how to plot. And plotting is without a doubt the hardest part of writing. Doing the dialogue is the fun part. The real work is sitting down there to work out a three act story with a set plot, solid characters and with every scene and action spelled out. When I first started doing it, it would take me literally a week sometimes to put together one story—a 40-hour week to do one plot.

V.A.: That's a lot of time.

CANNELL: A lot of time, but I was diligent about it. Sometimes it was frustrating because I just couldn't get the story to work. I learned a lot about plotting in those first two years. I didn't make much money, but I was spending a lot of time learning what I was doing.

You get to be a very good story teller when you're trying to sell scripts. The story is all your eggs in one basket and so you have to learn how to almost perform the story. You have to watch the producer, your audience, like a hawk. If a guy's eyes begin to float around the room you've got to move on to the next scene. You've got to learn how to play the guy when you tell him a story and I got very, very good at that sort of thing.

When I started getting meetings I had a 70 per cent success rate . . . out of ten meetings, I'd sell seven scripts. And when I wouldn't sell them, the guy was so impressed with all the effort that had gone into my preparation for the meeting that he would say, 'Look, your ideas are a little off,' or, 'We did some of that stuff before, but I'm impressed with the fact that you know how to plot a story and nobody else does.' I'll tell you, there were several times when the producer would say, 'You know, I'm going to give you an assignment anyway. I have a hunch about you.'

V.A.: What was your first sale?

CANNELL: My first sale was to *Iron-*

When we did* Duke, *Bob Conrad literally took my breath away. And the pilot for* Duke *may have been one of the best two hour movies I've ever done.

side Winston Miller made that deal with me Interestingly, every time I would sell a script to a series I would get a back-up assignment as well. So I did the *Ironside* and then an episode of *Adam-12*. I didn't know at the time that they were having trouble with their story editor when I came in and the actors (Martin Milner and Kent McCord) liked my stuff so much that they went to the show's producer and told him that they wanted me to be the new story editor. At that point in my career, I'd sold maybe four scripts, but I went right into being head writer of the show.

V.A.: You spent a lot of time with Universal Studios

CANNELL: I was at Universal for nine years and during eight of those years I created nine shows for them that sold I wrote over 100 scripts in that period. Universal was terrific for me They gave me a wonderful opportunity to gain some visibility in the industry. There were a lot of executives over there who believed in me Frank Price was one of them

I certainly was underpaid and I made more money for them than I made for myself, but that's still fine with me, because I got a career in the bargain. So when my contract was up after eight years, I refused to re-sign with them and formed my own company.

V.A.: After so long an association with Universal, why did you leave? Was it just the money?

CANNELL: No, it wasn't the money, it was a lot of things Money is a wonderful thing to have lots of, but let's face it, the definition of a hack is somebody who writes for money I don't want to be a hack I'll give you an example

When I was at Universal, they paid me $25,000 to write a pilot script for them. That's not, by the way, a lot of money for a pilot, but at the time it was like the third or fourth pilot script I'd written for them. The first three had sold, they were *The Rockford Files*, *Baretta* and *Chase*, which was not a very good show. But it sold, and *Chase*, actually, was the first one I did. Then I wrote this show called *Gran Prix*, a 90 minute pilot for NBC. They didn't like the script, but they didn't say they didn't like it, they just paid me for it

So every time I would go up there I'd ask about the script and tell them I wanted them to send *Grand Prix* over to the network And they would say, 'Well, well, we should get that over there, you're right it's been up here for months, why hasn't it gone to the network?' I found out later that 25 copies of the script were finally sent, but without cover letters to the executives telling them who and what they were looking at So I finally went to Frank Berk, who was running the studio, and said, 'Listen, what's going on with *Gran Prix*?' He said he didn't know I took out my checkbook and I wrote him a check for the $25,000 I'd been paid to write the pilot and gave it to him, and said I wanted my script back I hadn't written it for the money and if those guys weren't going to do anything with it, I wanted it back He said that was absurd, they weren't going to do that

Now, I thought it would make a good movie, so I got him to call someone over at NBC and he said, 'I'm sending a pilot script over and I want you to read it' We made a deal and shot the picture

But the thing about it was that at that point in my career it was more important for me to have the script than the money and that's the way I hope to feel about everything I do The work is more important than the bread. So, I didn't leave Universal for financial reasons. Obviously, I can make a lot more money outside the studio structure where I own the negative, where I own the company, where I'm my own boss, where I deal directly with the networks and not a studio middleman. But I also have the responsibility now to watch over a show's financing . . . now if a picture goes $100,000 over budget, it's my headache

V.A.: You and your company have to absorb that loss instead of passing it on to the studio?

CANNELL: Yes, but that's the trade-off I made total control of my life, company and product for more responsibility So there are advantages and disadvantages, but in the long run, it's a hell of a lot better deal for me

But my main reason for leaving Universal was that I didn't feel I would be gaining anything as a piece of manpower in this business by staying where I was for another four or five years. I already knew I could be successful at Universal . . . I was producing most of the TV shows at the studio. I knew I could make a very healthy living and could be a very successful producer in that structure, therefore there was no challenge for me there anymore What I wanted was to challenge myself and try new things, so I opened up my own company and I've learned a lot After producing for eight years at Universal I didn't know half of what I know now As an education, it's been a terrific experience. I've also done better monetarily, but that's not my main reason for leaving. I just didn't want to be sitting in the same chair I'm in now in ten years I may want to write a novel

V.A.: We're amazed at your productivity. This season you had three series on the air, all of which you were writing scripts for, especially *Tenspeed and Brown Shoe*, all of which you produced and many of which you directed. How do you produce that volume of work in a single season?

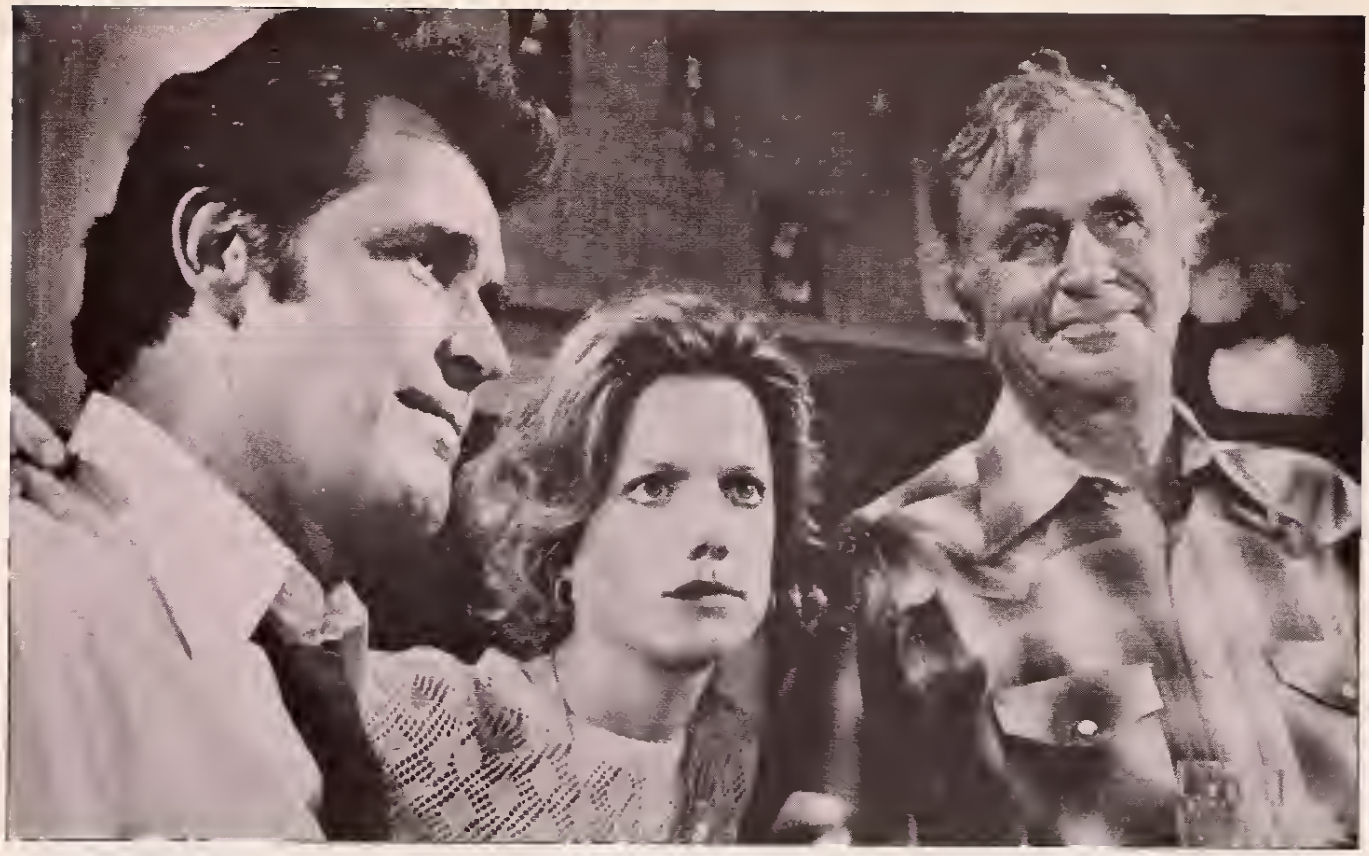
CANNELL: Well, for openers, I like to write A lot of really good writers I talk to don't like writing They're good at it, but they'll say to me, 'Jesus, I hate to write.'

V.A.: It's difficult for many writers to produce

CANNELL: It's painful for them but it's not for me For me it's something I really like to do When I'm writing well I'm in seventh heaven. I do go through periods where I don't like the stuff I'm writing, but that's usually because I catch myself using the same techniques and tricks that I've used before So I'm just bored with it because the writing's no longer fresh, no longer challenging to me Most people might think it's okay, but it doesn't please me. But I think I come out of the other end of those periods a better writer because I have to try to write things that are new and fresh for me

Another thing that's been a tremendous help is being in contact with other, really good writers. I've been tremendously fortunate, especially in my dealings with the staff of *Rockford*. I work on that show with brilliant writers. David Chase is one of the best writers in this industry and Juanita Bartlett, who's with me now in my company, is another. It's been tremendous because there are things that these writers do that I can't I read their stuff and go, 'Oh boy, that's just terrific God I'm so jealous I wish I could write like that'

I certainly love the police and private eye shows, but I think they're a liability now. The audiences have had it with cop shows, just the way they did with westerns.



James Scott Rockford (James Garner), In a rare photo (he's wearing a tie) with series regulars Beth Davenport (Gretchen Corbett) end Joseph "Rocky" Rockford (Noah Beery no longer Jr.).

V.A.: If you're so jealous of them, how come you wrote just about every episode of *Tenspeed and Brown Shoe* that has been aired to date.

CANNELL: No, no, no, hold on. And then *they* read my stuff and they say, 'Gee, this is great, I'm so jealous of him because we do different things.' See what I'm saying? I learn from David Chase and Juanita Bartlett some of their writing tricks, some of their craft, some of their strange plot twists, and I come out of it a better writer because now I can not only write like Stephen Cannell, but I can also give you shades of Chase and Bartlett. That's been a wonderful thing for me as a writer.

I have tremendous respect for writers like Phil Degare and Don Delasario who worked with me on *Black Sheep* and who now run their own operation. These guys are super writers and I learned things from them. Hopefully they learned something from me.

The reason I wrote so many episodes of *Tenspeed* is simply a question of time. I happen to write faster than most writers. I can give you a script in four days. We were under incredible pressure to get that show out that Juanita and I had to write most of them. I did seven and she did three, and two were done by outside writers. I was also trying to do *Stone* at the same time and there were problems with *Rockford*. We were in script trouble with *Stone* from the day we stared and we were also in trouble with *Tenspeed*.

Take a show like* Richie Brockelman, *which lasted for all of six seconds. I thought it was a terrific show and anybody who tells me that it was a bag of shit has got a fight on their hands.

So in order to stay on top of things I had to put myself behind the typewriter. I wrote four scripts in three and one half weeks. I'd do a *Rockford*, then two *Tenspeeds* and a *Stone*. But because I'm so fast, I could get all that we needed out in time. I'd put assignments to other writers, but if they were too slow, I'd say, 'Jeez, I don't have a script to shoot next week!' So I'd come in on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and finish one.

V.A.: Getting back to *Stone*, why do you think that show didn't catch on? Especially with a proven star like Dennis Weaver?

CANNELL: I can't answer that. I think Dennis was brilliant in the show. I thought it was well written and well executed. A real nifty little show. I still have two in the can that have yet to air.

V.A.: Do you think they'll ever get aired?

CANNELL: Who the hell knows? I've given this a great deal of thought. I mean, *Eischeid* was a good show with a viable leading man. It didn't get anywhere. *Rockford* is an Emmy winning show, and it's even better now than it was last year when it won. *Tenspeed* can't do much despite the quality of the show. It may well be that the audiences have just had it with cop shows, just the way they did with westerns.

Most of my development now is in other areas. I certainly love the police and private eye shows, but I think they're a liability now. It's hard to say. Maybe it was just a matter of bad programming. *Tenspeed* had no chance in its time slot, but the testing on the show continued to be very hot.

For us, it was a joy to make. There are people over at the network who are very bitter at *Tenspeed's* cancellation—high ranking executives who feel it's the best thing they've had on the air in a couple of years. It wasn't like the people at ABC just went, 'Ah, it's a piece of shit, it's not working.' There are people there right now who, if they were in control, would put it right back on the air.

V.A.: we're surprised, frankly, that the network didn't stick with it more and try to find a berth that would work on the schedule.

CANNELL: I am too.

V.A.: We've read in some of ABC's press releases that you personally enjoyed the crime genre, and of course, most of the shows you've been associated with have been in that category. What appealed to you about a World War II aviation show like *Black Sheep Squadron*?

CANNELL: *Black Sheep* had a terrific character. I try to write character motivated dramas. The thing I find so interesting about private eye shows is that you can take an Everyman type of character, an iconoclast, a man alone. And you put him up against some wonderful and interesting Goliath and examine his motivations. You can do it with humor and have wonderful relationships develop inside of the series' format. One of the joys of *The Rockford Files* is that we could do everything from heavy, heavy drama to spitball, mad, mad world kind of comedy. A writer never gets bored with that show because you can do literally anything you want on it.

V.A.: As you obviously did.

CANNELL: As we did. We did some really off the wall stuff, like the episode with Issac Hayes. That show had wonderful potential for a writer. It kept all the staff writers interested. I wrote the first episode of *Rockford* and the last and I enjoyed every one in between . . . and that's over 40 episodes.

V.A.: Our favorite was the episode guest-starring James Garner's Polaroid commercial partner, Mariette Hartley. You talk about screwball stuff, that one was wonderful.

CANNELL: Yes, the treasure being buried under the tree . . . only come On, get serious. But it worked! *Rockford* had a terrific attitude. When you have a leading man like Jim, who gives integrity to everything he does, you can get away with some pretty flaky stuff and he can make it work. I had the pleasure of directing that episode as well and Jim and Mariette were fun to work with. The whole thing was a joy to do.

V.A.: But back to *Black Sheep Squadron* . . .

CANNELL: The thing about *Black Sheep* was, again, its interesting characters. I'm not married to the private eye stuff, but it's always been the easiest to sell. You can go to the networks and say you want to do a private eye show and, if you've got any credentials in the field, you know you've got it. You give them a slightly different lingo because it's safe and has always worked before. So I ended up doing a lot of them.

With *Black Sheep* the studio came to me. They had the rights to this book and said they wanted to do a show about Pappy Boyington, an airplane pilot. So I read the book—it was written by Greg Boyington himself—and I thought it would be a trip . . . the airplanes and the South Pacific. So I called up the studio and said I wanted to do it. I never thought it was going to be a series, but I thought it would make a terrific two hour movie and that it would be fun to do. I was the most surprised guy in town when NBC bought it. I asked Phil Degare to produce it for me. He and I would sit around my office for hours and try to figure out what the hell to do with the goddamn thing.

V.A.: Where were you going to get airplanes for it?

CANNELL: I wasn't even worried about the planes. I was more concerned about how I was going to tell stories about the war in the Pacific. What was I supposed to do, kill a group of the enemy for God? Do I talk about the Yellow Peril? It's taken this country a long time to get over its hatred of the Japanese and they're now our allies. Am I going to make this show and run down the Japanese, make them the evil enemy every week? 90 per cent of America is going to be watching this on Sony TVs!

But the racial thing had never been part of the pilot. The pilot was really about Pappy's war against the Marine Corps, so I didn't really know how to make the show. And Phil and I tried. Our first couple of scripts followed along the lines of the pilot, but it didn't work.

Then we discovered that to make it work we had to treat the Japanese with tremendous respect. As we got deeper into it I created a character named Hirachi, the Rice Ball, the guy who would talk to Boyington over the radio during the dogfights. He'd say, 'Hey, Boyington, you got your swimming suit on today?' And the audience loved it. I started getting letters from Japanese-Americans saying it was the best portrayal of the Japanese ever done in a World War II film.

V.A.: We enjoyed the episode where they shot each other down.

CANNELL: But there was tremendous dignity there! When Phil and I hit on that we could start bringing the Japanese back into the conflict without treating them as the Yellow Peril. They were wonderful, and Hirachi was great because he was funny. Byron Chen played the part and he was wonderful.

So eventually we learned how to do *Black Sheep*, but it wasn't as if I had this grand scheme for this terrific World War II show. I never figured it would sell.

V.A.: When you're assembling the elements for a pilot, what do you look for when you cast your stars? Since your shows are so heavy into characterization do you need good actors who can pull it off?

CANNELL: That's what I'm looking for . . . good actors. I've had some extremely good looking leading men like Bob Conrad and Jim Garner and Dennis Weaver but they're also wonderful actors. They were right for the shows they were in. But the key thing for me is their acting ability.

It was really interesting when I hired Bob Conrad for *Black Sheep*. I knew he could act . . . I'd seen him in movies and on *Wild, Wild West*, but the man had never been given anything challenging to do. But he was good looking and he had that kind of cocky quality that was just naturally his and that I felt Boyington should have. So I went with Conrad—because (a) he's a star and could give weight to the project, and (b) he has the right personality for the part. He can just play himself and he'll be fine.

What I came to learn as we did the show was that Bob is a wonderfully talented actor. I would give him things to do and I'd be amazed at how good it would come across on film. I started out trying to write him like Garner in *Rockford* . . . you know, a con man, but that isn't Bob's style. Then I discovered the wonderful moments we were getting into *Black Sheep*, like when Boyington was writing a letter home to the parents of a dead pilot and he's crying through the dictating of the letter. Things like that—the touching things he would do, and the value he would give to the part.

As I was making that series I thought, 'Boy, has this guy had a bad rap'. People don't realize that after

I never thought* Black Sheep Squadron *was going to be a series, but I thought it would make a terrific two hour movie. I was the most surprised guy in town when NBC bought it.

Series star Robert Conrad (left foreground) and members of his "Black Sheep" squadron (too numerous to mention).

being in this business for 25 years, Bob can give you anything. So when I did *Duke*. . and the pilot for the *Duke* may have been one of the best two hour movies I've ever done ... he literally took my breath away. People won't take him seriously, but he should have won an Emmy for what he did in that picture. He makes you cry. It was just beautiful.

V.A.: In rewatching the *Black Sheep* episodes we had a lot of respect for Conrad as an actor.

CANNELL: My relationships with the actors I've been involved with have been great. They've all become really close friends. I'm devoted to their talent and appreciate what they give me back

You know, you give a guy a script and you get the script back on film and it's bullshit, and the moments that are supposed to be real aren't You feel really ripped off. But by the same token, if you give a guy a script that you've written yourself and that you love and he gives you back more than you thought was on the page, you can't believe it. You'd carry his make-up box

V.A.: The good ones make your words live

CANNELL: They make them better than you thought they were through their interpretation, through their talent. I've been lucky in that I've been associated with talented actors throughout

I made a pilot with David Selby for ABC. We didn't sell it, but, God, was he marvelous I mean, I'd go to the set every day and I couldn't wait to do this show because I knew David was so good Another actor I worked with was Nick Mancuso and it was the same experience. Whenever either of them are in town we get together for lunch ... and we'll work together again because they're extremely talented guys So I look for talent first. I think of casting a project and it's obviously nice if the guy is going to become a sex symbol or something like that.

V.A.: But sex symbols aren't what you're looking for.

CANNELL: I suppose I should look harder for that But what I really want is for the show to have quality acting.

V.A.: Speaking of working with certain actors again, do you and Garner have any plans on working together at all?

CANNELL: Oh yes, sure. When you've had a six year relationship with a guy . . . do you know that in the six years we did *Rockford Files*, Jim never asked for anything to be rewritten.

V.A.: That's amazing

CANNELL: And we filmed some scripts that never should have been filmed. There were scripts that went down that I wouldn't have wanted to be in, but Jim would never bitch He'd just get behind the show and do his goddamndist to make it better than it was And he'd always succeed.

Then, maybe six months later he'd say that he didn't like that particular script when we did it He knew bad material, he's no dummy. But he realized it was the best we could do that week and that the next show would be better. When you run into a guy like Jim who's got so much respect for you, there's nothing you won't do for him

V.A.: What kind of restrictions have the networks forced you to live with over the years?

CANNELL: Not many, really. There are certain restrictions on violence. Sometimes, when you sit down and look at it, you have to say, 'Yeah, this script is too violent,' and even though I liked it because it gave me what I was looking for in terms of action, I can see where I really don't need to have this guy die and you end up making compromises. But usually I won't compromise if I think it would really hurt the picture.

In the pilot for *Stone* there was a scene where he's talking to his daughter and telling her not to get laid, right? She says she's read in his book that cops go to bed with hookers and, all of a sudden, he's forced to come to grips with her coming of age sexually.

Prior to that was a scene in a dress shop where the kid wants to buy a pair of skin-tight jeans and a tube top and he's trying to get her into this little girl's dress Well, the network didn't want that in the script because they thought it was titillating I said

Dennis Weaver as Stone rings a suspect's bell in the series of the same name.

bullshit, it's titillating! It's a real and wonderful conflict for a man who is an author, who goes through the first third of the script crowing about his book and all of a sudden, when his daughter lets on that she's read the book, he wishes she hadn't. He wrote it, so why shouldn't she read it? But he realizes that he doesn't want her to be faced with the sexual aspect of his work.

Well, that's a wonderful character bit, but they didn't want that to be in the show. I said if that goes, I go. That's it, I just won't make the film. I called Dennis Weaver, who was my partner in the production, and told him I planned to do that. And he agreed. So the network was forced to take that and, much to their credit, after the show aired, Tom Kesey, the head of broadcasting, came up to me and told me I was right, the scene was beautiful. He was glad it was left in the picture.

V.A.: That's unusual.

CANNELL: There are times when I really believe in something like that and will go to the wall with the network over it. I think the people hurt most by network restrictions are the guys doing the half hour situation comedies. A guy like Danny Arnold really has troubles doing a show like *Barney Miller* where he's dealing with transvestites and the gay community. But it's a beautiful show. A half hour comedy like that with social content . . he probably gets his brains kicked in all the time because the special interest groups are all over him and the network.

V.A.: You said the shows you produce have to appeal first to you and then, hopefully, to the audience. Don't you think that's professional suicide?

CANNELL: Maybe, but that's the way I do it. The fact of the matter is, if you don't like your own show, you don't deserve to be doing it. I've never made a show that I didn't feel good about, ev en the ones that got cancelled.

Take a show like *Richie Brockelman*, which lasted for all of six seconds. I thought it was terrific and anybody who tells me that it was a bag of shit has got a fight on their hands! I'd rather feel that way than the way a lot of people I know in the industry feel, that everything is bullshit, that all this shit is good for is to make money. So if I'm not going to like a show I'm not going to create it, produce it or have anything to do with it. I have to be able to write it myself.

V.A.: You have to maintain your enthusiasm?

CANNELL: Enthusiasm and the other thing is, how are you going to know if it's good or bad if you don't care about it? I'm much more critical of my own stuff than the networks are. I took a *Tenspeed* over to ABC that I didn't like at all and they thought it was fine. I told them why I didn't think it worked, pointed out all the flaws. Afterwards, one of the network guys called me up and said he'd never seen a writer or producer do that before and, in a strange way I guess I gained a lot of credibility with him. But to me, the point is it's more important for it to be good than for them to like it.

I start out making a show that I like, that I'm going to want to do, and if it failed, like *Tenspeed,* I can feel like I made a hell of a good show. I have absolutely no regrets about that show except that I wish it had been renewed. Maybe a lot of the audience didn't want to watch it, but from my point of view it was good television.

V.A.: You're a busy man. This season you were producing three series and writing an awful lot. Where do you find the time to direct and what makes you decide to direct a certain script?

CANNELL: Well, it's a lot of fun. I want to do more directing as my career progresses. I'd also like to write and direct feature films. It's a good chance for me to try out things and see how my ideas work out. I also like to run a company like it's a family. I don't believe in hostility between the staff and the front office.

An interesting thing happened on the set of *Toma,* the first show that I produced, on the first day of shooting. I went down to the set and some grip in the shadows of the soundstage saw me coming and yelled at the top of his lungs, "Producer on the set!" What he was saying was that if you're fucking off get straight because here he comes! I thought that was really chickenshit. I hadn't gone down there

to bust anybody's balls. I came down because I was interested in what was going on. But the producer, I realized, was an authority figure and I didn't want to be an authority figure. So I figured that the best thing to do is direct every company I produce.

A lot of things happen when you stop being the guy up there in the office. You become a human being to the people on the set. If you have an ability with people, which I like to think I do, you get to talking with them. I would make a point of sitting with them at lunch every day instead of taking my tray into an air conditioned motor home. Pretty soon, the guys were coming up to me. Now I'm Steve when I go down to a set instead of Mr. Cannell. It makes a big difference. People come to my office when they have a problem because they know I'm going to give them a hearing, because they're treating me now not as the boss but as a guy they know and who they maybe like. So that's another good reason for directing, to create that kind of rapport with your company.

V.A.: A crew will also work just that much harder for a producer they like.

CANNELL: The actors too. If you deal with your actors as creative artists, you develop a greater rapport with them as well. See, they accept the creativity and the quality of the script, but there's something different when you're working on a script together, when you're giving them direction and motivation.

Take Jim Garner. Jim will always give you everything you want. He's the most professional actor in the business. He should give star lessons to everybody. Anyway, in the first episode of *Rockford* he had a scene with four pages of dialogue and Jim was carrying it all. He's a pretty good study, but the first couple of tries were aborted. Finally, affer a few rehearsals, we shot it and he got it all on the first take. But for my taste it wasn't right, it just lacked some emotion. The words were right but the emotion was wrong.

So I said, 'Okay, let's put a hold on that one, we'll do another take.' Jim took me aside and asked what I was doing. He thought he had done it fine, but I thought it could be better. He said, 'C'mon, Steve, that's a toughy, that's a lot of dialogue.' I asked him to do the scene over again and this time, get pissed off. He was pissed off at me anyway, so why not use it? He said, 'I don't want to do it again, but I'll do it if you want me to.'

But the trooper that he is, Jim went back and did it again and it was terrific. When the scene was over the crew applauded, which doesn't happen often. I said cut, print it and he came over to me in front of the entire crew and said, 'I guess we found ourselves another director.' Now that was my first directing assignment and all of a sudden, I'm not only getting respect from this man for my writing, but he also thinks I know a little something about what's supposed to be here. So you end up getting a good rapport that goes both ways. The warmth I felt towards him as a result of that, and I think he felt towards me for standing right up to him . . . those are the nice moments that you remember a long time.

V.A.: We're going to stray from prime time a little bit to the cable and home video markets. Has there been any impact on you as a producer because of all of these new markets opening up.

CANNELL: I don't know. It may in some way reflect the declining levels of prime time, but I haven't been involved in any of it so it hasn't directly affected me.

V.A.: Do you have any plans for supplying the cable networks with any material?

CANNELL: Possibly. At this point I haven't given it any real thought. I have a contract with ABC and I'm opening up into features now, so whether I will or not . . . I certainly wouldn't turn my back on it if it were offered to me. I'd look it over carefully.

V.A.: You've mentioned features several times. Do you plan on getting into features exclusively and giving up the grind of television?

CANNELL: No. I've been offered a lot of feature work in the last two years and I've had to turn most of it down because of the television that I'm contracted to do.

I'm in the midst now of putting a feature deal together that's going to be quite large. But I still have a lot of television to do for ABC and I want to do it really well. I want to make it better than any work I've done to date.

V.A.: That's something to look forward to. Speaking of ABC, do you think they stood behind you on *Tenspeed?*

CANNELL: My feeling is that they really did their best promoting the series and then they put it in the wrong time slot. I was very grateful for the promotional blitz they put on.

The question was, were we doing all right until *CHiPS* moved in? The star of *CHiPS* (Eric Estrada) has the highest "Q" [personality] rating in television! On CBS, opposite us, you've got *Archie Bunker's Place* and *One Day at a Time* with a 47 share of the audience lead-in from *60 Minutes*, and you've got *Tenspeed* on ABC with a 19 or 20 per cent lead-in . . . 25 points at the head of the hour. It was impossible.

V.A.: So *Tenspeed and Brown Shoe* got killed.

CANNELL: And they knew it was going to get killed. That's a brutal time slot. *Charlie's Angels* had the advantage of being on for five years and having a nice audience to bring with it. We didn't have that. We had three weeks of sampling.

V.A.: How do you do it? Where do you get all the energy to do everything that you've done and everything that you're going to do? Do you ever sleep at all?

CANNELL: Oh sure. I put in between nine and 11 hours a day, but that's it. I don't work weekends, except for this year when I put in a few weekends when we were in a real bind for scripts. But for the most part I devote my weekends and evenings to my family. I get up very early in the morning, five a.m., so I can get to the office by six. I write from 6 to 11 every day. I can have a script for a two hour movie finished in ten days on that schedule and that's a good stint of work.

V.A.: Do you think Mark Savage will ever get a series of his own?

CANNELL: [laughing] No. I doubt it.

V.A.: That's unfortunate. I'd like to see who you'd cast as Mark Savage. Have you ever thought about it?

CANNELL: No. I really haven't. Mark Savage was simply a device for *Tenspeed,* that's all.

V.A.: You're committed to quality television. Both *Rockford Files* and *Tenspeed* are quite good.

CANNELL: Well, there's damn little quality on TV now. But there are some wonderful shows. *M.A.S.H.* is one, *Barney Miller* and *Archie Bunker* are others. There are some really nice shows on television . . . really good stuff. But even in a lot of them the good stuff is beginning to narrow down.

V.A.: They are beginning to wear a little thin and we think the networks know it. By the way, we've heard a rumor that *Black Sheep* is doing better on the *CBS Late Night Movie* on Wednesday than it ever did during prime time. Is that ture?

CANNELL: Oh yeah. It beats Johnny Carson every time it's on.

V.A.: Sort of ironic, isn't it?

CANNELL: I always maintained that the show was a hit. Fred Silverman came out in Dave Kaufman's column recently and said he had only two regrets in joining NBC. That was that the man in there before him had cancelled *CPO Sharkey* and *Black Sheep Squadron* before he got there. He felt they were both hits and shouldn't have been cancelled. They were. ■

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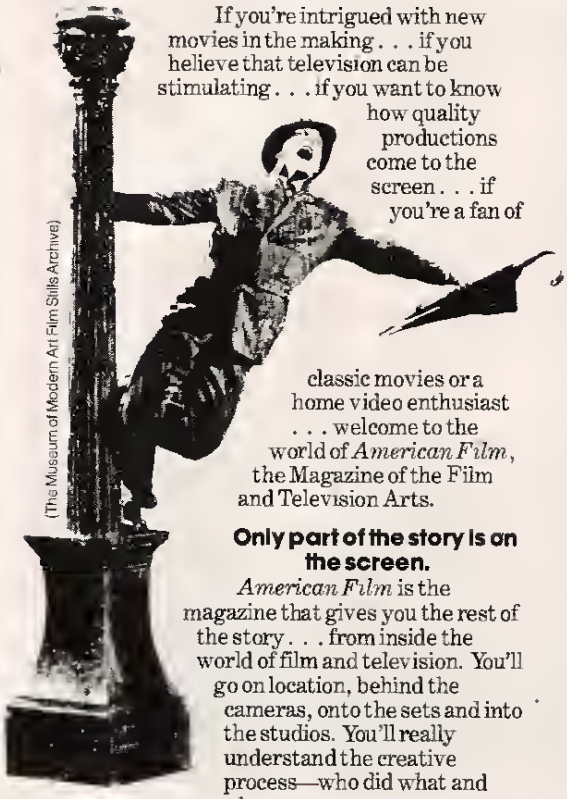

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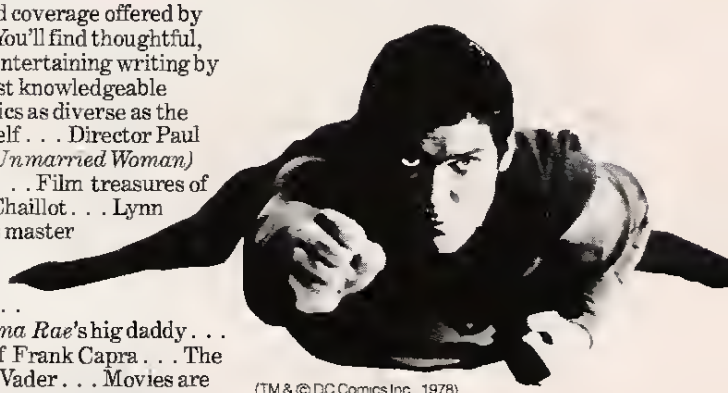

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PRIMA FACIE

A FIRST VIEW OF WHAT'S NEW

VIDEO ROCK

***One For The Road*, by The Kinks. Produced by Ray Davies. 55 minutes. Time-Life Video (distributed by WCI Home Video), $49.95 retail.**

Time *Life* Video is heralding the Kinks *One For The* Road as "a history making video performance" because it is the first concert to be recorded and released simultaneously on record album and video tape. More importantly, it is among the first rock video tapes produced specifically for commercial consumption rather than a vehicle for promoting album sales. The significance of this fact cannot be denied, although it has little bearing on the artistic or entertainment value of the product. Nevertheless, for the first time, you can own your very own "live" rock concert.

How this will affect the future of video rock is anybody's guess; a few remarks on the past probably would be appropriate.

Video rock is nothing new. Its roots can be traced back to the television premiere of *Shindig* back in 1964. Unfortunately, it has evolved into the likes of Wolfman Kirshner's Midnight Rock Mess. Feature-length movies of live rock performances also have been around for some time, but most of these appear to have been made as an after-thought.

The advent of the video cassette recorder opened an entirely new avenue for video rock. Promotional video tapes to push new albums and bands have proliferated in the recent past, and at least one band, Devo, has built its reputation on unique video tape antics. But these presentations are short, usually containing only two or three songs, and they are not designed for sale to the general public. In this respect *One For The* Road is indeed breaking new ground. It represents the true new wave of rock.

Video cassette recordings have certain drawbacks as a medium for musical entertainment which should be acknowledged at the outset. Current tapes and machines are monaural. Although stereo VCR is reputedly in the offing, the typical home television is still mono. This would therefore require connection to some alternate audio medium, such as the ever present home stereo system. This step is recommended even for mono recordings, unless you like listening to music through the tinny two inch speaker supplied with your 19 inch screen. Additionally, video cassettes are played at a considerably slower speed than typical audio tape, yielding a distinctly inferior sound. Nor is the quality of the VCR picture as good as film.

All of these limitations disappear with laser optical videodiscs. The laser optical approach is damn close to true digital recording, with virtually no loss of the audio or visual signals. The sound quality of these videodiscs may prove to be so superior to anything else commercially available that they could supplant the home stereo as the medium for listening to music, with or without the presence of a visual track. An optical videodisc of *One For The* Road might be available in the future.

The Kinks is Ray Davies' band, and *One For The* Road is Ray Davies' video tape. He produced it and was even in charge of post-production. His stage presence predominates the vast majority of the footage, occasionally to the detriment of the tape as a whole. Davies is an exuberant stage performer, and the tape does an excellent job of capturing his live performance, but there were times when I would rather have been watching his brother Dave's guitar work than Ray's mugging for the camera.

One For The Road *is indeed breaking new ground. It represents the true new wave of rock.*

For a recorded live performance, it is light years ahead of anything previously done. The sound is excellent considering the fact that it was recorded live as well as the previously mentioned limitations. The music consists mainly of either very old or very new material, and they are mostly tried and true "hits."

The camera work is clean and simple. The first five numbers are straight footage of the band on stage with none of the gimmicks we have come to associate with rock video from watching too many reruns of Midnight Rock Mess. I think this is a point in Davies' favor. Receding monitor images and overlapping images from different camera angles quickly grow tiresome, and a certain aura of a live performance is retained by avoiding these tricks. "Celluloid Heroes" contains some surprisingly good slow motion work, shots of the band fooling around backstage, and a look at fans buying tickets and filling up the hall. Considering the subject matter, this is probably the most apropos number on the tape. Ray Davies has indeed

entered the realm of the celluloid heroes.

The highlight of the show for me was "Where Have All The Good Times Gone." Davies pays a tribute to ancient video rock by interspersing the number with vintage footage of the Kinks playing on *Shindig*. The editing on this sequence is exceedingly well done. I do not know what song they played that night on *Shindig* but it sure *looks* like they were playing "Where Have All The Good Times Gone." Quite a feat, considering the fact that it had not yet been written.

After that little trip down memory lane, Davies returns to straight concert footage and maintains the pure live performance theme for the remainder of the tape. As the band leaves the stage and Ray Davies says goodnight to the audience, the credits roll on the screen. After the credits end, the band comes back on stage and does two encore numbers. The show ends with a view of the house lights coming on and the crowd beginning to leave.

But despite all its attempts to do so, *One For The Road* cannot duplicate the experience of a live concert. It is as good a rendition of a live performance as one is likely to get on video tape at this time. The true essence of a live concert lies in the audience as well as the band. Like watching anything else on television, a video tape concert requires little or no participation by the viewer. As the review illustrates, one finds oneself spending more time studying the camera work and the editing than actually watching the performance itself.

This is the crux of the matter: The Kinks's video tape does not add any significant depth to their music. If you do not already like the band, the video tape is not going to convert you. After the opening number, "All Day And All Of The Night," each song elicits a peculiar feeling of *deja vu*. If it were not for the judicious use of backstage scenes, *Shindig* footage and the like in the middle of the tape, the whole experience might have been uncomfortably boring. The fault does not lie in the workmanship, which was excellent, but in the subject matter.

Let's face it: there is only so much you can do with a live performance. Once you have played out the close-ups on the singer's face (in this case Ray Davies himself), and panned across the audience jumping up and down in time to the music, there's not much else to do. Anything longer than 60 minutes would have been pushing it.

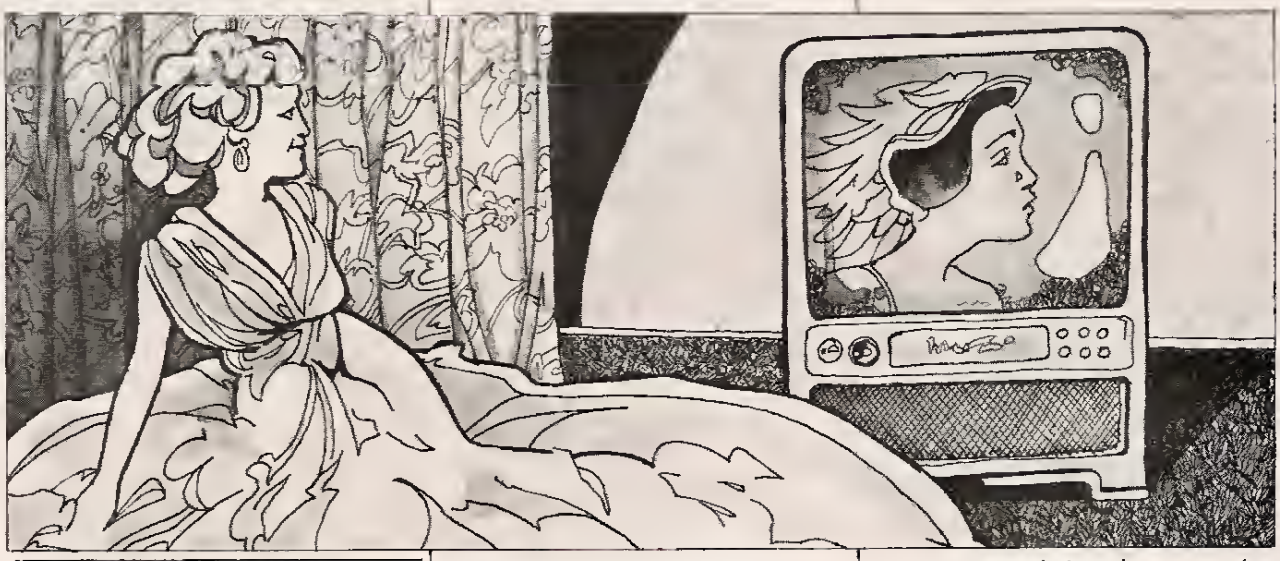
Do not get me wrong. I think there is tremendous potential in video rock, and Ray Davies is to be applauded for taking the first major step. It is a medium in its infancy, and like early television, which did little other than mimic radio, it must let go of its mother's apron strings before it comes of age.

Much is being done in the world of video rock, and some of the shorts currently being played on such late night shows as *Rock World* point to the future. The Pretenders' "Brass In Pocket" and XTC's "Making Plans For Nigel" demonstrate what can be done besides showing the band on stage, live or simulated, strumming guitars and singing. In both these non-distributed video tapes, the bands act out the theme of the song. The latter, "Making Plans For Nigel," gives a surrealistic visualization of a patient being evicted from a mental hospital although he is obviously in no condition to face the outside world.

Todd Rundgren has been fiddling with video since 1972 and was sufficiently convinced of the viability of video rock to sink several million dollars into a video studio. His recent work featuring his own band, Utopia, indicates that he is shooting for a synergistic effect from the combination of rock music and video imagery, a child that exceeds the expectations of either parent.

Any way you look at it, video rock is here to stay. As we old rockers approach middle age, the prospect of visual rock entertainment without the distinct possibility of some cretin on 'ludes throwing up in your lap becomes very appealing.

—*Rick Oliver*



VIDEO TAPES

***VideoFashion Quarterly*, Volume 1, No. 1 1979. Producer: Marlene McGinnis. Editor: Nicholas H. Charney. Creative Director: B. Jeffrey Madoff. 90 minutes. Copyright VideoFashion Inc. $29.95 retail.**

Try to imagine your favorite fashion magazine suddenly coming to life: the whisper and rustle of finely-tailored fabric; the ebb and flow of draped dresses gliding smoothly down runways bathed in a Mardi Gras of colored lights; flashbulbs pacing the excitement as models pose and whirl, smile and pout; a breezy movement in the perfectly coiffed hair on a dozen stunning heads.

For 90 uninterrupted minutes, *VideoFashion Quarterly* goes one-on-one with current high-fashion magazines—and gives them a run for the money.

As the name implies, *VideoFashion Quarterly* comes out four times a year on Beta and VHS cassettes and covers each season's latest designer collections and fashion trends. Volume 1, No. 1 begins by giving in-depth display to the works of a wide sampling of top name designers. The list includes Bill Blass,

Halston, Carol Horn, Anne Klein, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Mary McFadden.

The cassette is not simply a 90-minute fashion show. *VideoFashion Quarterly* is put together in a true magazine format with short feature "articles" including an interview with Isaac Asimov on fashion in the future and highlights in the lives of fashion models.

When it does get down to showing the clothes, *VideoFashion Quarterly* takes several different approaches. Designers talk about the directions they believe the latest modes are taking, and their work parades before you as visual example. In another section, Spring 1980 clothing is focused upon by the various creators.

Carefully selected music accompanies each presentation, and the fashions take on a whole new dimension. A fine example was the KanSai collection, where clothes were presented to a low, throbbing, vaguely menacing Oriental melody. Models dressed in futuristic helmet-like hats and geometrically fashioned clothing paraded slowly into and out of a darkly-lit stage area. It is doubtful such a stunning, sensual impact could have been made in any fashion magazine.

For every person who has longed to attend a Paris fashion showing, *VideoFashion Quarterly* gives quite a decent "you-are-there" feeling. The video medium's look of immediacy lends itself well to the unveiling of the newest collections, far surpassing the static quality of magazine coverage.

Video also eclipses print in single-outfit display. Clothes are shot from all angles, from close-up to far away. Even four different photos of the same outfit in a magazine—which is rarely seen—will not give you such an overview.

Technically, *VideoFashion Quarterly* has the look of careful planning and execution. It is obviously backed up with enough money for proficient camera and directing talent.

The picture was sharp and clear enough to be able to zoom in and pick up even small detail work on blouses, skirts and dresses. Camera handling was smooth, quick and confident. Kudos to creative director B. Jeffrey Madoff, who did not linger on close-ups of models' faces but in most cases went straight for the clothes

The most exciting aspect of *VideoFashion Quarterly* may very well be its unique ability to present fashion designers' personalities. Video might just cause fashion sales in the future to be based on creator idiosyncrasy and not solely on the collections themselves.

There are three drawbacks to the concept of a video-taped fashion "magazine." Certainly the most outstanding is price. A single "issue" of *VideoFashion Quarterly* costs $29.95; a year's subscription runs $99.95. By comparison, the quarterly imported Parisian edition of *Vogue* runs about $11.50 a copy.

A second drawback lies in the fact that a videocassette does not lend itself to the leisurely flipping back and forth of pages or concentration on any one particular outfit. Each costume is on-screen between 20 and 40 seconds and one must rewind to review. No price or shopping information is given.

However, unlike printed magazines, some of the initial cost can be recouped through recycling. When the fashions on any particular cassette become passe, thorough treatment with a good bulk eraser leaves you with a completely reusable blank tape.

The video medium's look of immediacy lends itself well to the unveiling of the newest collections, far surpassing the static quality of magazine coverage.

Finally, there is the problem most television news operations bemoan—not enough time to give anything more than superficial coverage. Several of *VideoFashion Quarterly's* features were too short; 80 years of fashion went by in a matter of four or five minutes and touched on only a few very general fashion trends from each decade. The feature highlighting a model's life boiled down to "it's wonderful to get paid to go to exotic places and yes I know I'm peddling my looks and it does not bother me."

VideoFashion Quarterly certainly is not for everyone. Its market is the affluent woman (although future issues promise features on men's fashions as well) who spends a healthy amount of money on her wardrobe.

This does not mean it excludes women who do not have the means or desire to spend $1,000 or so four times a year for the latest designer clothing; everyone can get ideas and inspirations from this sneak preview of coming trends. However, it does cater to the well-to-do woman who prefers viewing designer collections at home instead of going to Europe to see the latest shows.

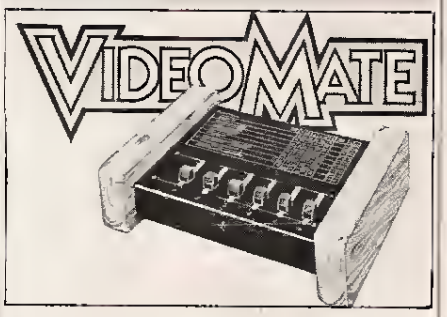
And if your are ten or more pounds overweight, brace for a severe feeling of bloat as you spy the impossibly-thin models floating toward the camera.

VideoFashion Quarterly is the beginning of a whole new era in marketing. It is viable and exciting; certainly it is a trendy pioneer not to be missed by serious fashion followers or anyone with a keen sense of style.

—*Ann DeLarye*

GIZMOS

Videomate, from Total Video Supply Company, 9060 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego, CA 92123. Model VM600, retail price: $119.95.



It is amazing how far we have come in less than half a decade. In the mid-1970s video freaks were content with a 19-inch color television set—today some of us have so much junk we are buying homes with special video rooms just to store all the stuff.

There are some of us out there who actually have two video cassette recorders. Some folks have a video-disc player—many more of us will have them by next year at this time. We have one of those home video game devices that allow us to slip any of four dozen different cartridges into its bowels and send us to an arcade-funhouse the likes of which would confound the most rabid shopping mall fanatic.

Some folks have two different VCRs because they bought a snazzy new model and they cannot conceive of selling the older model.

Others bought one format and found out all their friends have the other type. Still others are making copies—possibly illegally—of their favorite movies and/or television shows in order to trade with their friends.

No matter. There are lots of us out there with a ton of video equipment, and whenever we want to switch from one machine to another, we have to spend hours unfastening coaxial cables, crawling around on all fours pulling the one right wire out of the back of one machine, only to replace it with the one right wire from the back of another. If you have ever tried it, you know what I mean. It is a mess.

Until now. Somebody finally invented a device for the video junkie—a machine to which you can wire all your video hardware and simply throw switches in order to get the right image from the correct machine to your television set.

Total Video Supply Company has marketed a device called *Videomate* and does all this stuff. You can wire your video game, two cassette recorders or one cassette recorder and one videodisc player (or even two videodisc players), and your television antenna or cable input to the Videomate, throw the appropriate switches, and get what you want from where it is to where you want it to be: if you wish to make a copy of one tape while watching a television show on another channel, for example, the Videomate will allow you to do just that with no rewiring.

The Videomate (which, by the way, is a trademark of the Total Video Supply Company) really is an extended A/B switch—one of those simple little devices that allows you to wire two different video machines into your television set. All video games come with an A/B switch: you put your antenna wire into one end, the video game cord into the other, and flip the switch between the two. Videomate is the grown-up version: you have six A/B switches, and by setting them in the proper order, you can do anything.

Somebody finally invented a device for the video junkie—a machine to which you can wire all your video hardware and simply throw switches to get the right image from the correct machine.

Installation is quite easy—easier than it seems when you first glance through the instruction booklet. You wire each of your devices to the machine, running a coaxial cable from the output of each machine to the appropriately marked input of the Videomate. You run a coaxial cable from the output of the videomate (marked "To TV") to the antenna input of your television set—the place where your VCR cable used to go—and you can switch instantly between four different sources. A 12-year-old can install the device inside of 30 minutes.

The switching codes are a bit confusing, but most of them are marked on the machine. If you want to watch a tape from your primary machine, you set the six switches to the following positions: A-A-A-A-A-A. If you want to watch a tape on your auxiliary VCR while recording a program on your primary VCR, you set the switches to A-B-A-B-A-A. If you want to record two different channels on each of your VCRs while you are watching a third station live on your television set (true bliss for the football freak), you set the Videomate to A-B-A-A-A-A. It takes a bit of getting used to, but the secret codes are all there on the machine and in the manual.

All of this sounds a lot more imposing than it really is. If you can set up your VCR to tape a show while you are away—and admittedly, some folks can not—then you can use the Videomate.

At $119.95, the Videomate is expensive. Hopefully, with increased sales and the proliferation of video stores, the price will come down a bit—members of the *Time-Life* Video Club were able to purchase one of these things for the slightly more reasonable price of $94.85.

If all you have is one video cassette recorder and a video game, the Videomate is not for you. But if you add a third component—another VCR, or a videodisc player—the Videomate is indispensible.

It requires no power, it has no electronic devices to breakdown, and it takes up little space. For the video junkie, it is the greatest thing since sliced bread.

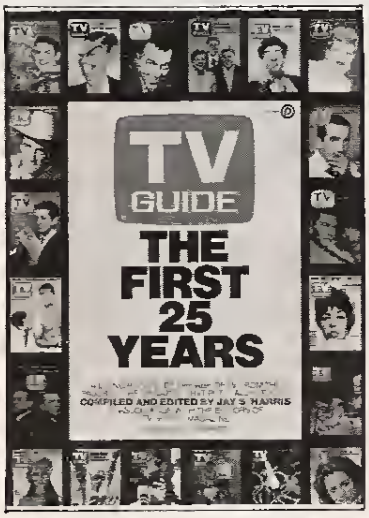
In fact, it is so good I wish there was something wrong with it. It is embarrassing to write such a glowing review of a product, especially in our first issue. —*Alex Josephs*

BOOKS

TV Guide: The First 25 Years. **Compiled and edited by Jay S. Harris in association with the Editors of *TV Guide Magazine*. 319 pages. Plume. $8.95.**

Commercial television and *TV Guide* practically share the same time frame, both infants in the early '50s. No other periodical has documented the development of television as has *TV Guide*. Week after week for 27 years it has been the indespensible conduit between The Tube and those of us mesmerized in its pulsations.

Evidence of this is the fact that *TV Guide* is the best-selling magazine in the world—nearly one billion copies sold annually.



This book is comprised of many of the best representative articles from the first quarter century of the magazine's existence. It is a nostalgist's delight.

As one nurtured on the glass teat, I found myself walking through many early memories. . *Howdy Doody* (I was jealous of those lucky New York kids in the anut Gallery) . . . Dagmar (my mot thought her silly and vacuous) . . . *oller Derby* (I particularly liked to watch the ladies fight for lead position and I had to take the sleazy announcer's word for it that "red hair's flyin' all over the track," since color tv was still a few

years away) ... Dave Garroway and *Today* (my father took me to a broadcast in 1956 and I shook hands with J. Fredd Muggs who was just slightly smaller than I at the time) ... the Kennedy/Nixon debates (my father observed, concerning Nixon, "Look at that jerk sweat!") ... JFK's assassination (I do not remember the televised interviews of former presidents Truman and Eisenhower recounted here but I remember John-John's salute and Lee Harvey Oswald's gasp of pain) ... *Candid Camera* (who could look at a mailbox the same way after watching this show?) ... Steve Allen ("Schmock! Schmock!" ...)

But of course, we all have our easily jogged memories. And this book will indeed jog your memory, particularly the center color section of representative *TV Guide* covers. I don't think I'd thought of the *Gale Storm Show* in 20 years until I saw her on one of the covers. Then there's George Reeves, Phil Silvers, Roy Rogers, Mitch Miller, Nick Adams, George Maharis, Charles Van Doren, and, naturally, Ronald Reagan.

There is much more to *TV Guide: The First 25 Years*, though, than celebrity puff pieces. We find for example such historical and sociological commentaries as:

—"This is Murrow" (June, 1954): "No one—CBS, sponsor Aluminum Company of America or the Republican Party—told Ed what to do about (Senator Joseph R.) McCarthy. This was a conscience piece. Ed says, 'I have a wonderful arrangement with my sponsor. They make aluminum and I make film.'"

—"Television and the Feminine Mystique" (by Betty Friedan, February, 1964): "Do anything you can to hook that man, all those images of women on television say, because you aren't or can't be a person yourself. But without studying, or working or doing anything yourself, you can be a 'housewife' at 18. And get all those expensive things for wedding presents, just like *Queen for a Day*—a lounge chair, a dishwasher, a whole set of china, baby furniture, even a free trip to the beauty parlor every week."

—"How Drastically Has Television Changed Our Politics?" (by Arthur Schlessinger, Jr., July, 1966): "Before the [Senate Foreign Relations Committee's] hearings [on Vietnam] most people had suppressed any disquietude they may have felt over the deepening national involvement in Vietnam on the assumption that the President had more information and no doubt knew best. But the hearings had the clear effect, for better or worse, of legitimizing dissent. If eminent generals, diplomats and Senators were unhappy about our actions in Vietnam, then the ordinary citizen felt free to indulge. And the hearings ... ended the taboo which had so long prevented discussion of American relations with Communist China."

—"Chicago—A Post-Mortem" (by Reuven Frank, December, 1968): "Between 1964 ... and 1968, the average middle-class American has gone through many wrenching experiences. His tranquility has been shattered. He has been exposed to realities of war in a way no previous generation of Americans has had to face its war. He has seen ghetto riots in his living room. He has watched with horror young people of good background expressing contempt for his dearest values in the way they dress and act and what they say ... what he has seen on television has shaken him physically and morally, made him fear for his safety, his savings, his children, his status.... It is a short and understandable step for him to conclude that television threatens him."

There is much, much more—"Live-From the Moon," "How to Manufacture a Celebrity" (concerning the early career of Barbara Walters), "The Bumbling Barnum of Sunday Night" (Ed Sullivan), "Batty Over Batman?"

For us vidiots, *TV Guide: The First 25 Years* is a rich feast of chatty celebity pieces, in-depth articles of opinion, interviews with media movers. A particularly interesting part of the book is an all-inclusive index of nightly network programming from 1953 through 1978.

As we look in wonder toward the future of video, this work stands as a reminder of TV's modest, innocent beginnings and the burgeoning role it now plays in our lives.

—*Alex Josephs*

Sweeps, by Bill Granger. 320 pages. Published by Fawcett Gold Medal Books, $2.50.

Politicians are lucky. They may make strange bed fellows, but at least there is always someone there—regardless of how strange they may be—to keep them warm during the long anxious hours of crisis. Not so in the back-stabbing, dog-eat-dog world of the television networks. Oh sure, there is plenty of screwing around going on in those lofty executive suites, but come sundown, the big boys at the nets sleep alone. When the screwing does begin, it will be kept under *their* control.

These are cold ruthless men who run television, and not even the news is exempt from their heavy handed power struggles. Disseminating the Word to the people may be a public service, but all those satellite feeds, foreign bureaus and correspondents' expense accounts cost a lot of money. The news is Big Business. It is also *show* business, and its ratings are watched as closely as are those of *Dallas*.

That is why Barbara Walters gets

(Continued on Page 62)

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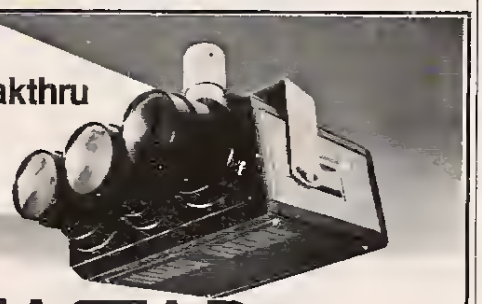

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ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO WATCH!

The British Teletext Revolution has already begun, and the outcome will have a profound effect on American television. Part One of a series.

SERIES by Richard Burton

MEET THE JONES FAMILY: Mr. and Mrs. Jones and their two children Susan, 16, and Bobby, 12. They are an average British middleclass family living in an average home with all the average modern conveniences, including a not so average television set.

Through their television, the Jones' lifestyle has changed by the simple fact that at the press of a button, they have access to a vast reservoir of news and information. They are a teletext family enjoying a brand new form of broadcast journalism without deadlines or bulletins. Teletext is news and information available instantly.

It is morning in the Jones household. Mr. Jones is first to rise. He turns on the TV set and, using the remote control keypad, quickly punches in the numbers that call up the "pages" featuring the news headlines and latest weather forecasts. While breakfasting he scans the pages of stock market reports and exchange rates. He has an important business meeting in Manchester. A quick check of the motoring conditions section tells him that road repairs will make the journey by car impractical, so he selects a suitable train from railway timetables called up by his keypad on another video "page."

With her husband off to work, Mrs. Jones uses the televisiose set to plan her shopping trip to London that day. However, before using the keypad to call up the pages of the consumer guide section, she cannot resist a quick look at the pages which display the synopsis for her favorite soap opera, of which she missed yesterday's episode. Having done that,

checked prices at the stores she intends to visit in London and looked at that day's diary of events in the capital city, she, like her husband, calls up the rail travel section to find a train that will get her to London before lunch.

Their parents out of the way, the Jones children take over the teletext system. Like many other such households, they are the family members who most quickly adapted to the new medium and virtually control its use during the times when the whole family is together.

Today Susan is eager to find out the latest happenings in the pop music charts and also uses her keypad to call up film reviews and the latest fashion news. Bobby, the energetic 12-year-old, like many kids, learned very quickly how to key in the numbers that called up his favorite pages. Not only does he want to see how his football team faired last night, but he knows that the special puzzle and jokes pages are due to be updated today—and that can not be missed!

This scenario easily could be read as just another prediction of the future, except for one small detail: all of it is happening in England now, in 1980.

The above scenario easily could be read as yet another of those "gee whiz" predictions of what the future has in store for mankind, except for one small detail: all of it is happening in Great Britain now, in 1980.

Currently, 100,000 specially adapted sets have been sold or rented to very ordinary people like the Jones family. To enable these sets to exist at all, three complete textual information systems are in full-time operation. It is even claimed that the potential audience for these systems is greater than that for normal television broadcast because teletext sets are displayed in public places like hotels, libraries, and police stations.

Two of the systems have been developed by Britain's two network television companies, BBC and ITV, and are broadcast by them simultaneously with the regular TV signal. The third, Prestel, is more of a newcomer having been developed and now controlled by the British Post Office. For this a specially adapted TV set is hooked into the existing telephone system (also run by the Post Office), along which Prestel's computer generated information is transmitted, allowing for a much greater flexibility of operation.

The entire Prestel system will be the subject of a separate article in the next issue of *Video Action*. This time the spotlight falls on the two broadcast teletext systems—Ceefax and Oracle.

In 1972, research engineers of the government-owned British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) put together a number of new technological developments and found a way of making better use of the ordinary television signal.

They found that the British standard 625-line TV picture has several "spare" lines, not used to form the screen image. Digital pulses, travelling as part of the regular TV signal, could, with the aid of a decoder built into the domestic receiver, be formed into numbered panels of textual information called "pages." These pages look rather like pages of typescript, except that they can also include large-size letters and simple drawings: maps, graphs, diagrams, and so on, in any of six colors. Each page can carry as many as 200 words. A hand-held remote control unit could be used to select individual pages by tapping in the number of the page required. They called this system Ceefax.

The BBC was not alone in its discovery. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), controllers of Britain's commercial radio and TV stations, were also developing a teletext system. They called their system Oracle. Optional Reception of Announcements by Coded Line Electronics.

Within six months the BBC had begun test transmissions of Ceefax. In 1974 all the organizations with an interest in the new information systems came together with the object of devising a unified standard. In September of that year a trial experiment began for both systems culminating, in the Autumn of 1976, with the government giving the green light to start full transmissions of both Ceefax and Oracle.

To receive the teletext systems, television sets had to be equipped with decoders; paperback-size packages of electronics that could be built into new sets and added to existing ones as external adaptors. Either way it added considerably to the cost of a domestic television set; about $450 extra at present, though it is hoped prices will tumble as more and more people become aware of the systems.

However, once equipped with a teletext-receiving set, a viewer has a wealth of information literally at his or her fingertips: news (updated constantly), sports, business, road, rail, sea and air information, film, theatre, ballet, music news and reviews, ex-

hibitions and events nationally, TV listings, books news and reviews, and much, much more.

With Ceefax the BBC enjoys an advantage over its IBA rival in that it has two networked channels through which to run its teletext system. This is only a temporary advantage, however, as the IBA is to open its second TV channel in a little over a year.

On a typical day, over 400 pages are shared between the two BBC TV channels. BBC-1, the main channel, carries the "instant" news—oriented pages which need constant updating: news, sports, finance, weather, travel; while BBC-2 groups its pages into an electronic "magazine" called Orbit, which caters to the leisure-minded. Consumer news and advice, music, theatre and films, and a special children's section are just some of its contents.

The pages are transmitted on a continuous cycle—roughly 100 pages every 25 seconds. The page selected by the viewer is held or 'frozen' on the screen whilst the cycle continues automatically. If the number of the pages required is keyed in before that page comes round on the cycle, that page appears almost instantaneously. However, should the page have been transmitted, it is possible to wait up to 25 seconds before it appears on the screen.

A team of 20 people operating from a relatively small office atop BBC-TV's London headquarters compile Ceefax's information and constantly keep it up to date during its broadcast hours from 6:00 A.M. to midnight, seven days a week.

The service costs the BBC about one million dollars each year to run, a sum a Ceefax spokesman described as ". . . a drop in the ocean" when compared to how much the Corporation spends on its other broadcasting services.

The Ceefax editorial office is fed by all the major international news agency wire services as well as being linked to BBC-TV's own extensive news department. Fast-breaking news stories literally can be updated by the second. For those that need to be keep in constant touch with an important story, there is a page facility known as Newsflash. Once activated by a button on the keypad, the latest details of that story will appear, automatically, in a small box cut in to the normal TV picture.

This facility recently has been developed to provide sub-titles for the deaf or hard-of-hearing to some of BBC-TV's top-rated variety and drama shows. The viewer calls up the relevant page and Ceefax cuts in the sub-titles automatically as the show is broadcast.

However, this sort of application is still being evaluated and is only a small part of Ceefax's main function as an information provider.

The commercially-based Oracle encountered an entirely different set of problems.

"In a sense it's a miracle that Oracle ever got on the air at all," said a spokesman for the company. "After all, we are the logical thing to turn to when the commercial breaks come on!"

This remark highlights the major difference between the Ceefax and Oracle operations. Ceefax is funded by taxpayers' money, while Oracle is supported by revenue from advertising on comercial television.

Oracle is jointly owned by the 15 regional television companies that make up Britain's Independent Television (ITV) network. Each finances the system proportionately to its wealth.

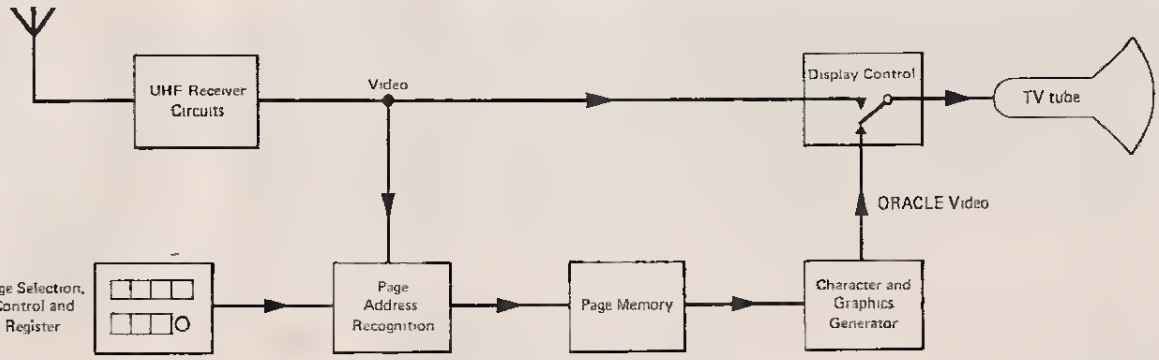
Based at the main studios of one of the two London commercial stations, Oracle currently broadcasts around 350 pages of information 15 hours a day, seven days a week. Having only one channel on which to run the system, Oracle is reluctant to expand the system any further because of the wait time for pages—around one minute presently. Each new page adds one quarter of a second to that time.

All news and finance pages are produced from a sub-office at Independent Television News (ITN), another jointly owned ITV company, providing news for the whole network. Here a small team has its own block of pages which it prepares and feeds straight into the system each day. This leaves the main Oracle editorial office to produce the information and service pages.

With 15 ITV regions to serve, Oracle naturally has to devote a lot of space to television listings for each company and prides itself in having full reviews of every film being shown within the ITV network each day—no mean feat!

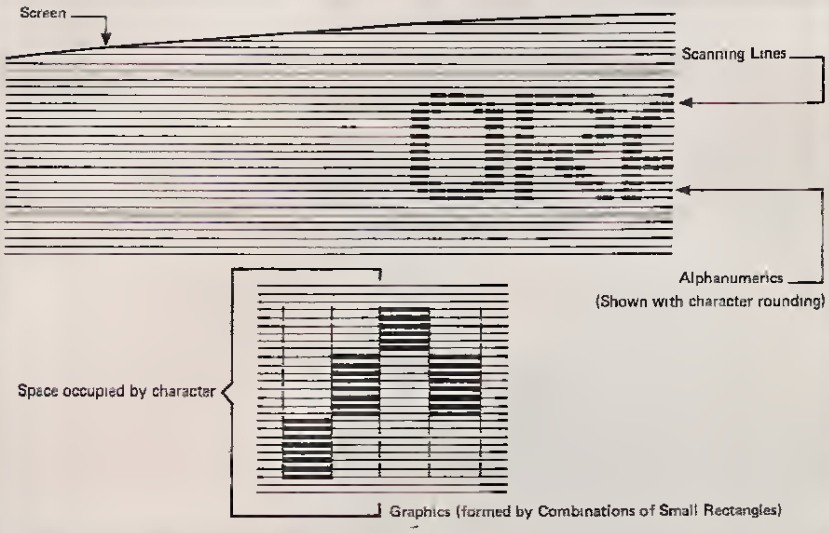
Another major task is a "What's On" section for the whole of the country. Major cities are adequately served with publications listing theatre, opera, ballet, music, films, and festivals in their own areas, but nowhere has there been an effort to combine all this information on a national scale—

what is needed to receive ORACLE



The ORACLE receiver system

what do ORACLE pages look like?



The ORACLE Display — a schematic showing how the alphanumerics and graphics are formed.

except for teletext

All in all, Oracle provides basically the same sort of information service as Ceefax, though perhaps with more of a popular style. They tend to design flashier graphics (a great field of rivalry between the two companies) and were the first to develop a special TV camera that can scan photographs and convert them to teletext pages.

Although still an experiment at the moment, advertising is carried in a very limited form in the Oracle system and is certain to play a major role in the system's future. "It will have to if we are to survive," said a spokesman.

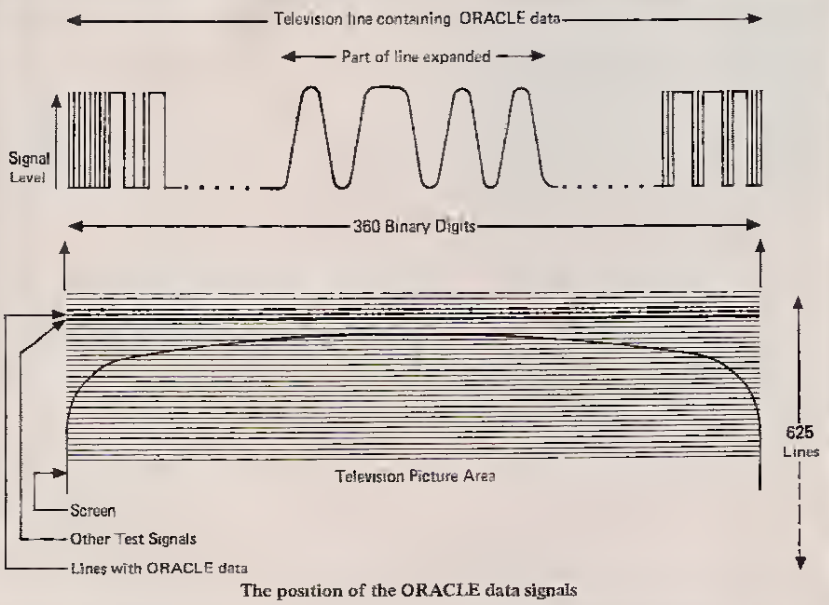
Being such a new and unknown medium, attracting the attention of the big ad agencies is still a difficult job. However, competitions run on the system by the set manufacturers have proved to be enormously successful and are sure to help prove Oracle's case.

All of this activity is merely the top of the iceberg. Though primarily developed for the consumer market, the uses of teletext systems in industry and education are manifold.

For industry and commerce, Ceefax and Oracle already offer regular market reports throughout the day, plus major company news, news of exchange rates, reports from industry, and international financial news.

The viewer has a wealth of information at his fingertips: news, sports, business, travel information, film, theatre news and reviews, exhibitions, and much, much more.

how is ORACLE transmitted?



The position of the ORACLE data signals

Ceefax operates a special newsroom for its financial service, attached to the BBC's own financial unit. From there three journalists provide hourly updates of selected shares, the Financial Times Index and a myriad of other services including reports from Wall Street and many other world money markets.

In education, experiments are being conducted to find out exactly what kind of service is best suited to Britain's schools and colleges.

So far, Ceefax and Oracle have joined forces on two major experiments involving selected schools and colleges throughout the country, providing back-up material to regular educational television programs. The advantage of the teletext system is that the pages of material are available to the students and teachers to refer to at their own speed before and after a program is broadcast.

Oracle reports some schools have used information on their system to trace weather patterns over the whole of Europe. An unexpected bonus has been the interest shown in school-

children in designing their own graphics for teletext pages. Oracle has a constant demand for grids to be supplied to schools to cater to this new art form.

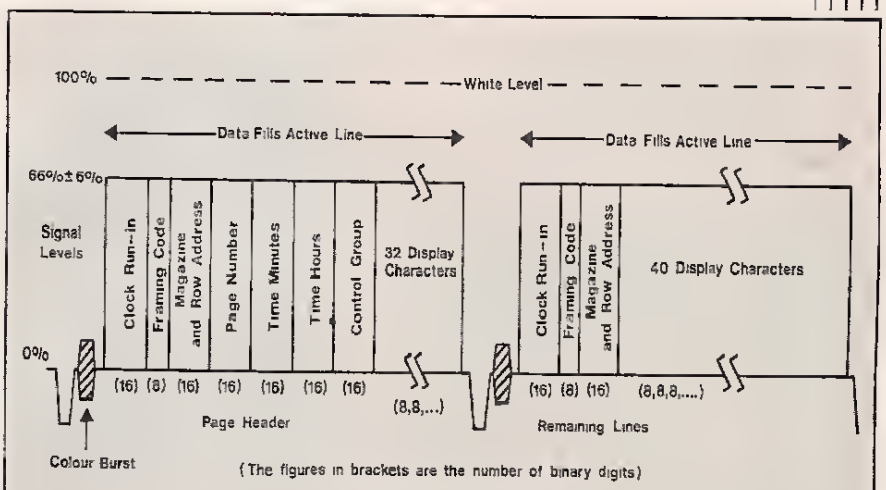
With an electronic medium such as this still so much in its infancy, the future can only be bright and full of fascinating developments.

Undoubtedly the major goal all concerned with the teletext industry are seeking to achieve as quickly as possible is greater public awareness. Despite the existance of both Ceefax and Oracle for nearly three years now, large sections of the consumer market are unaware of the new medium.

Much of this is due to the big TV rental companies (through which 60 per cent of TV sets in the U.K. are placed) being slow to realise the potential of teletext. This, however, is at last changing.

Only with the mass market being reached will the cost of teletext receivers come down. Ceefax estimates that by 1985, or sooner, the decoder units will become cheap enough to be installed in all new color television sets coming off the production line.

ORACLE brief specification



ORACLE data organisation

Viewers will be able to feed information into their TV sets, thereby creating the "intelligent" machine that can work out tax problems, teach and play games.

They also forsee a new generation of decoders fitted with microprocessors enabling viewers to feed information into their TV sets as well as take it out, thereby creating the "intelligent" television that can work out their tax problems, teach, and play games.

Both Oracle and Ceefax have plans already drawn up for full regional services. Local news and information then will be available at the push of a button. Viewers will be able to check prices at their local supermarket before leaving home!

So everything in the garden looks rosy for Britain's two teletext systems —or does it? On the horizon stands the mighty Prestel, the latest contender in the battle for control of your home TV. It casts an awesome shadow over Ceefax and Oracle; over a quarter of a million pages currently available; a capacity for more without the headache of extending wait time; input and output facilities; the backing of the Post Office and page space available to anybody who wants to buy.

We will look into the Prestel system next month. ■

(Richard Burton is Video Action's London correspondent.)

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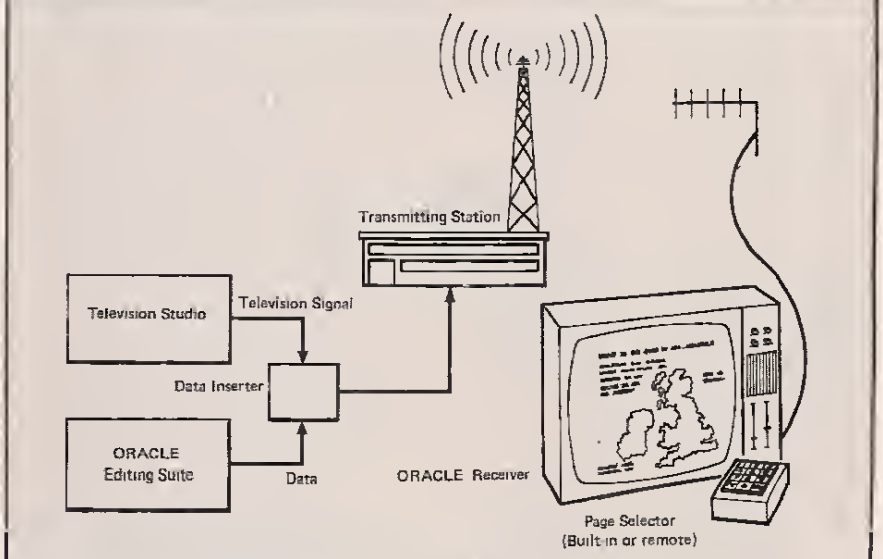

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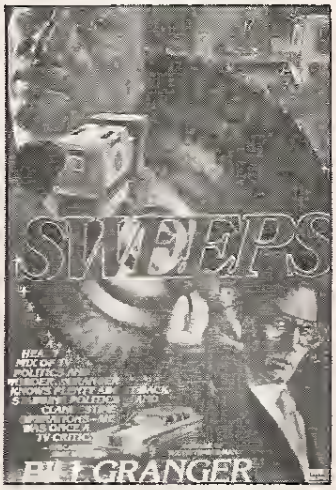
REVIEWS

(Continued from Page 54)

$1,000,000 a year from ABC.

That is why Dan Rather will replace Walter Cronkite on the CBS Evening News despite Roger Mudd



and any promises that may have been made to him.

It is against just such a background that former newspaper television critic Bill Granger sets his novel of

The murder mystery is not nearly as interesting as the behind the scenes intrigue at the network.

suspense, *Sweeps*. Sweeps is a term out of the television age, referring to the quarterly Nielson ratings on which the price of commercial time is based. High numbers in the sweeps means more money in the network coffers, and if anything in television is taken as gospel, it is that.

Sweeps is actually two stories, the first concernig life and death in the ratings, the other murder. Both are tightly interwoven into a sometimes exciting but always interesting novel set at an unnamed fourth television network and concerning its network news anchorman, Jeremy Heron. Heron has been on the air for 25 years, is respected in the industry (making him a rare man to begin with), has a 93% recognition factor with his audience and is watched by almost as many people as Walter Cronkite.

It is the latter which causes his troubles today.

"There's only one number in television," Heron is told by a fellow correspondent, "and that's number one. You can be number two, but not for long, and anything lower is cancellation time." Because of this the decision-makers uphigh have decided it is time for Heron to go and for some fresh blood to be pumped into the news. Of course, in television—especially with men with the status of a Jeremy Heron—the axe never takes the form of a pink slip in your pay envelope. You are finagled out of your position through behind the scenes plotting and scheming, the likes of which make Machiavelli look like a piker.

And, since this is the age of ratings, polls, surveys and galvanomic skin tests, the old fashioned, rolled up shirtsleeves type of television journalist has nowhere to go but out.

One of these pollsters-cum-executives—indeed, the prime-mover behind Heron's expulsion—is a young man named Rudy Liebowicz, who just happens to be Heron's daughter's lover. Naturally, Lea Heron knows nothing of her boyfriend's treachery, but it is no surprise to her when she finds out.

"Everyone has enemies. Especially in television. You wouldn't believe how vicious it is," she says. And because she has grown up with these people, she knows the score and hates television, "... not because of the fact of it—something that sends pictures through the air—but because of what it does. We have a nation of zombies because of it. We have so trivialized our tastes, our perceptions of the world through it over the past thirty years that it really has made us all crazy." Unspoken but obvious to the reader is that the people behind the scenes in television have been more severly warped than any viewer could possibly get through merely watching the tube.

As if Heron did not have enough troubles just holding on to his job, he must also contend with the vicious and seemingly pointless murder of Simon Kinzie, Heron's former colleague who had dropped out of his life after being backlisted in the McCarthy era. Kinzie is found dead and the evidence points to Heron.

Still, Granger's murder mystery is not nearly as interesting as the

(Continued on Page 78)

CINEFANTASTIQUE.

The magazine that separates the flick from the flack.

Sometimes the truth hurts.

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Unfortunately, that objective philosophy has made us somewhat unpopular in Hollywood, where legions of press agents (known in the trade as flacks) would have you believe every film is the most exciting feature since GONE WITH THE WIND, and every special effect is a unique new concept that's never been done before.

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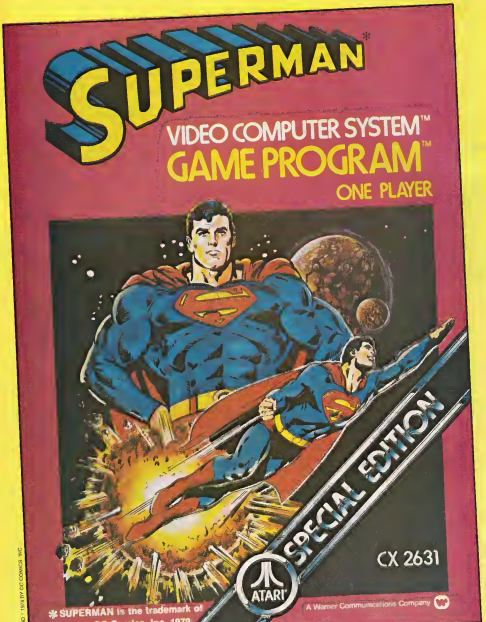


IT'S A BIRD... IT'S A PLANE... IT'S A VIDEO GAME!

THE EVIL SCIENTIFIC GENIUS LEX LUTHOR HOLDS the city of Metropolis in a fearsome reign of terror. The Metropolis Memorial Bridge has been destroyed and Luthor's criminal minions run rampant throughout the city!

How will Metropolis survive?

Suddenly, the air is filled with the roar of rushing wind as a heroic figure wearing a cape cleaves the sky above.

Look, up in the sky!

It's a bird.

It's a plane.

It's an electronic blip!

Maybe that's not exactly the way you remember it from the television program or the comic books, but in Atari's new "*Superman* Home Video Game" you see blips and not Gene Hackman and Christopher Reeve.

Don't get me wrong, though. Atari produces games that allow you to battle alien invaders, be a football, basketball or hockey player, bowler or boxer, battle fierce dragons, match wits with a computer in any one of dozens of games of chance, take part in military engagements and aerial dogfights or engage in quickdraw contests with gunfighters of the old west, as well as dozens of other computerized contests of skill and speed. But only one lets you become Superman, the Man of Steel. And it is because of that, as well as the complex and imaginative course of action it takes that makes *Superman* one of the best and most challenging games on the home video market today.

I must admit from the start that I am a bit biased in my opinions of *Superman*. When I was younger I faithfully watched the televised *Adventures of Superman* and was a fan of the comic books. And, for a good chunk of the recent past, I have been a comic book writer. And though I have never actually scripted any of the *Superman* stories, I, like most people in the comic business, have a soft spot in my heart for "The Big Red 'S'," considered the granddaddy of the comic book super-hero. Afterall, it was his appearance in 1938 that sparked the rise in popularity of comic books and four-color heores. It is fairly safe to assume that had it not been for Superman (not to mention the men who created him, Jerry Siegal and Joe Shuster), we would not be doing what we do today.

Over the years, the Man of Steel has shown up in the comics, novels, newspaper comic strips, on radio programs, movie serials, television shows, animated cartoons, big budget films, and his likeness has appeared on everything from lunch pails and telephones to underwear. So if Superman has been around so long, what's the big fuss all about?

Because Atari's video game finally offers us the opportunity to give the big guy a hand!

So now that you've got your Atari

REVIEW by Paul Kupperberg

Video Computer System all hooked up to your television, your brand new *Superman* cassette plugged into the unit and the joystick clutched eagerly in your hands, what can you expect to see?

Well, first off, there's the cast of characters. In no way do any of them look the least bit like people, but then again, there's no confusing Clark Kent with Lois Lane, either. Clark appears wearing his ubiquitous blue suit and brown hat, while Lois wears green and the ridiculous pillbox hat made famous by Noel Neill in the television show from the Fifties.

The infamous Lex Luthor is easily recognizable, if only by his hairless and uncovered head, and certainly for the whirly-bird unit on his back, with which he zips around the playing field. Luthor's quintet of henchmen are easy to spot. They are the ones carrying the big guns.

And, of course, there's the main man himself, Superman. When Clark Kent steps into the phonebooth and sheds his Brooks Brothers exterior, he turns into a vision of blue . . . with red boots and a collar and a flesh colored cape thrown in. While he's flying the cape billows in the wind behind him, and, since Supes is the only character in the game that can both fly and walk, when he's on the ground the cape disappears. Alas, the classic (not to mention trade-marked) red "S" chest emblem is missing from this rendition of the Man of Steel. But then, so are several other small details, such as hair, a face and hands.

Now that you are able to differentiate between the various little multicolored blips on your screen, it helps to know where they are going. The background consists of different scenes, all connected and all representing a different section of Superman's city, Metropolis.

A tour of *this* Metropolis, however, isn't exactly going to take you to any of the city's hot-spots or tourist attractions, but it will give you all the locations you need to play the game. There are assorted city blocks on different levels, with each level a different color. On one street is the phonebooth where Clark Kent can change to Superman, and vice versa, away from prying eyes. Another contains the Daily Planet building (identifiable by the globe on its roof), while a third shows the Metropolis Memorial Bridge.

There are two entrances to the Metropolis subway with several scenes of the system on various levels. And, of course, we are supplied with a jail to hold Luthor and his mob once you've succeeded in capturing them. Zipping around through all of this are a helicopter as well as three Krypto-

Atari's* Superman *video game is the most fun you can have short of being born on the planet Krypton yourself.

TMs & © DC COMICS INC 1978

nite satellites which are dangerous to Superman should they come in contact with him

The object of the game is for Superman to capture Lex Luthor and his five cohorts while searching for, returning and reassembling the pieces of the blown-up Metropolis bridge and getting Clark Kent to the Daily Planet, all in the shortest amount of time you can manage A digital timer in the upper right hand of the screen keeps you informed of your playing time, which tends to be a little discouraging to the beginning player who has to watch seven or eight minutes tick by before he's finished But do not dispair This is one tricky game and it takes a bit of practice to master. I know a nine-year-old boy who manages to do the whole thing in a minute and 45 seconds I've given up trying to break the five minute barrier myself. The kid's just too good for me

The game begins when you press your re-set switch and Superman lands by the phonebooth, changes into Clark Kent and starts walking towards the Daily Planet building and work But before Clark can cross the bridge that will take him there, it explodes with a boom, scattering its three pieces across the entire field of play. Clark immediately does an about face and rushes back to his phonebooth, this time changing from mild-mannered reporter to Man of Steel and flying off to the accompaniment of sound effects of flight

Only the movements of Clark and Superman can be controlled with your joystick, which allows you to direct the latter's flight path through all the levels of Metropolis The Video Computer System controls everything else, randomly scattering the pieces of the bridge and selecting the whereabouts and movement of Luthor, the henchmen, Lois, the helicopter and the Kryptonite satellites.

Superman can lift the sections of bridge and the other characters by landing and making contact with them But so can the helicopter, and that's one of the little complications that help make *Superman* so much fun. Each time Supes snags a henchmen (or Luthor himself, for that matter) he has to fly them across the city to the jail, where he deposits them behind bars one at a time Each time a crook is placed in jail a marker disappears from the upper left of the screen, which keeps track of the number of felons still prowling the streets with evil on their minds

The bad guys are by no means easy to catch either They, like Superman, have complete freedom to wander hither, thither and yon through and across the different levels, provided of course, they follow a logical, preset sequence In other words, you can not get down into the subway unless you fly your little Kryptonian blip through one of the designated entrances Nor can Clark Kent walk to the Daily Planet unless the bridge is whole, thus connecting that scene to the next one.

So let's assume you have been able to round up all your villians and have them locked up in jail. Now you begin searching for the pieces to rebuild the destroyed bridge Well, first you have got to find them. Remember, they could have landed *anywhere* in Metropolis, so you've got to fly Superman throughout the city and keep your baby blue x-ray eyes peeled for the debris The bridge sections will not move from where they've landed unless the helicopter makes contact with them The copter can and will pick up one or more sections, and drop them off in a different part of Metropolis So even if you've located part of the bridge while you are bringing a crook to jail or another section back to its rightful place, that piece may not be there by the time you get back

If you get fed up with flying around in circles you can always make use of another of Superman's powers, x-ray vision. This is done by landing Superman and pressing the red controller button on your unit and moving the joystick in the direction you wish to see From any one scene you can look one place to the right, left, up or down.

Once you have managed to find all three sections of the bridge and have flown them back to where they belong, the bridge reassembles over the river and your are near the end of the game.

But there are one or two obstacles thrown in Superman's path At any time, one of the three Kryptonite satellites may swoop into the scene and should it make contact with The Man of Steel, he instantly loses his super-powers and has to land, releasing his hold on whatever object or person he is carrying at that moment Only by touching Lois, who automatically enters the scene when this happens, can he once again become super, man Only then is he free to go off and complete his mission . . provided you are able to steer him clear of any further contact with the Kryptonite Otherwise you have got to go through the whole thing again.

And now, after lots of sweat and fancy maneuvering you've got Luthor and Co safely tucked away in the hoosegow and the bridge put back together again You are almost finished with your mission for truth, justice and the American way All that remains to be done is to fly Superman back to the phonebooth where he changes again to Clark Kent, walks across the newly reconstructed bridge, take the subway to the Daily Planet and files the big story with that great Metropolitan newspaper.

Then and only then does a musical tone sound and the clock stops

After that, of course, it's time to start all over again with the ever present desire to shave just a *few* seconds off your time!

Like the other Atari games, *Superman* has a few handicaps built into it in the form of the difficulty switches on the Video Computer Unit One such difficulty for the advanced player—like that smart aleck nine-year-old—makes Luthor and his gang move away from Supes at twice their usual speed, as well as sending the Kryptonite at him at the same rate Another handicap prevents Lois from automatically popping into the scene whenever Superman is zapped by the Kryptonite, meaning that valuable time is lost searching for her before he is super again

Atari is a subsidary of Warner Communications, which also owns *Superman* Publisher DC, as well as the companies which distribute the comics, license the characters for outside merchandizing, and distribute both *Superman, The Movie* and *Superman, The Soundtrack*. Though this might all seem a bit incestuous at first glance, it just goes to prove that the people behind the game know the character of Superman well and were prepared to handle him within the mythical framework established over the last forty years

Needless to say, they have done their work well

Atari's "*Superman* Home Video Game" is the most fun you can have with Superman short of being born on the planet Krypton yourself ■

There are games that allow you to battle alien invaders or be an athlete, but only one lets you become Superman, The Man of Steel!

NOVICE GUIDE

(Continued from Page 35)

tend the zoom range. They may make them a little lighter. That's about the only thing that's in the offing."

Choosing between black and white and color cameras is a matter of price. Top of the line color cameras run as high as $3,000; the average price is in the neighborhood of $1,000. Most black and white cameras cost less than $400 (these prices do not include videocassette recorders).

If you buy a color camera you will have to deal with a few more technical features. Do not be timid in this regard—color cameras have many automatic features and are designed for ease of use. "We don't let a customer leave here until they understand the camera. It takes a very, very short time—depends on the individual. From a minute to five or ten minutes, that's all. They're so easy to operate—they're fully automatic," Anderson claims.

Actually shopping for a camera is a formidable task. There are approximately 16 companies in the field and over 40 cameras now available. If you are not comfortable with the idea of shopping by electronic specification sheets, the best thing to do is go to several area stores and play with the merchandise.

Having some idea of the main parts of a camera will help you articulate what you want to see.

The *viewfinder* is the part of the camera which faces you and allows you to see what you are shooting. There are two types. The optical viewfinder allows you to see your shot directly. This type either attaches to the top or side of the camera or leads through the lens. Some brands feature lines drawn or etched onto the viewfinder that help you center your shot if your viewfinder does not lead through the lens.

The second type is electronic and will play back your shot exactly as it will appear on your tape; in effect it is a miniature television set built into your camera which plays back what you shoot as your are taping. This type of viewfinder will also act as a *monitor* (a fancy term for a television set used for playback, or in a studio, for watching what is being shot) which will play back your tape instantly on location. If you do not like what you have taped, this type of viewfinder has the advantage of letting you know immediately so you can rewind and tape over. No centering lines are needed with an electronic viewfinder.

The length of your camera's cable is an important consideration if you intend to use your camera mainly around the house. When you detach your camera from its tripod and carry it, the camera's cable length will determine how far you can go. Cable lengths differ widely, before you shop, know the size of the rooms in which you will most use the camera.

Avoid annoyance later by finding out how long you can operate your camera at any one time. Batteries wear out after an hour to an hour and a half, after which you must recharge them. The shooting capacity of any brand you look at should be a key consideration.

Finally, decide whether you prefer a shoulder-rest type of camera or a "pistol-grip" (which means you hold the camera in your hand as you would a gun). Usually the heavier color cameras will have shoulder rest designs, whereas the lighter black and white cameras can be operated comfortably with a pistol-grip.

The *lens* of the video camera is the barrel-shaped part in front. Its adjustable rings and numbers look complex, but once you handle a camera you will find this set-up easy to understand.

One ring allows you to *focus;* that is, to take the blur out of the picture and make it clear. Manufacturers tend to make this ring a rough texture so you can find it without taking your eyes off your viewfinder.

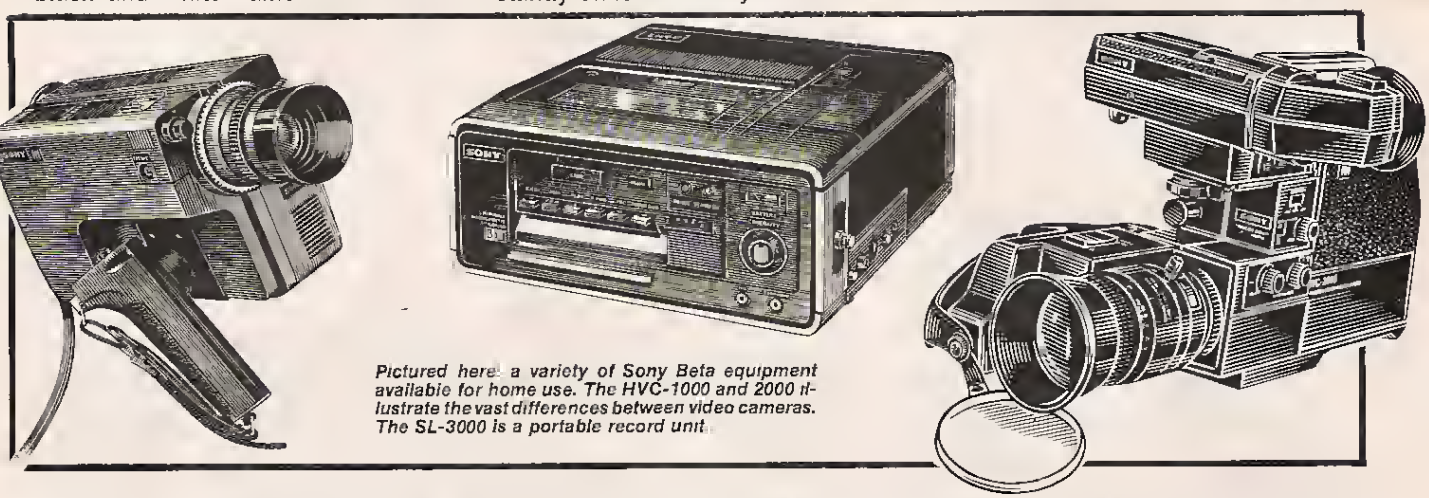
Another ring on many cameras is for the *zoom function.* This allows you to get a closer or farther shot of your scene without moving the camera. The way to compare the zoom capabilities of various cameras besides handling them is through the use of the zoom ratio. You will find this on a camera's specification sheet. It is a ratio like 2:1, 4:1 or 6:1. The higher the first number the farther away or the closer in you can get to your subject.

For example, the subject you are shooting is at 1. If you *zoom in* to your subject (that is, use the zoom to make the subject appear closer) using the entire range of a 2.1 zoom, your subject will appear twice as close. If you visually compare two cameras with different lengths of zoom you will instantly see the differences in the zoom ratios.

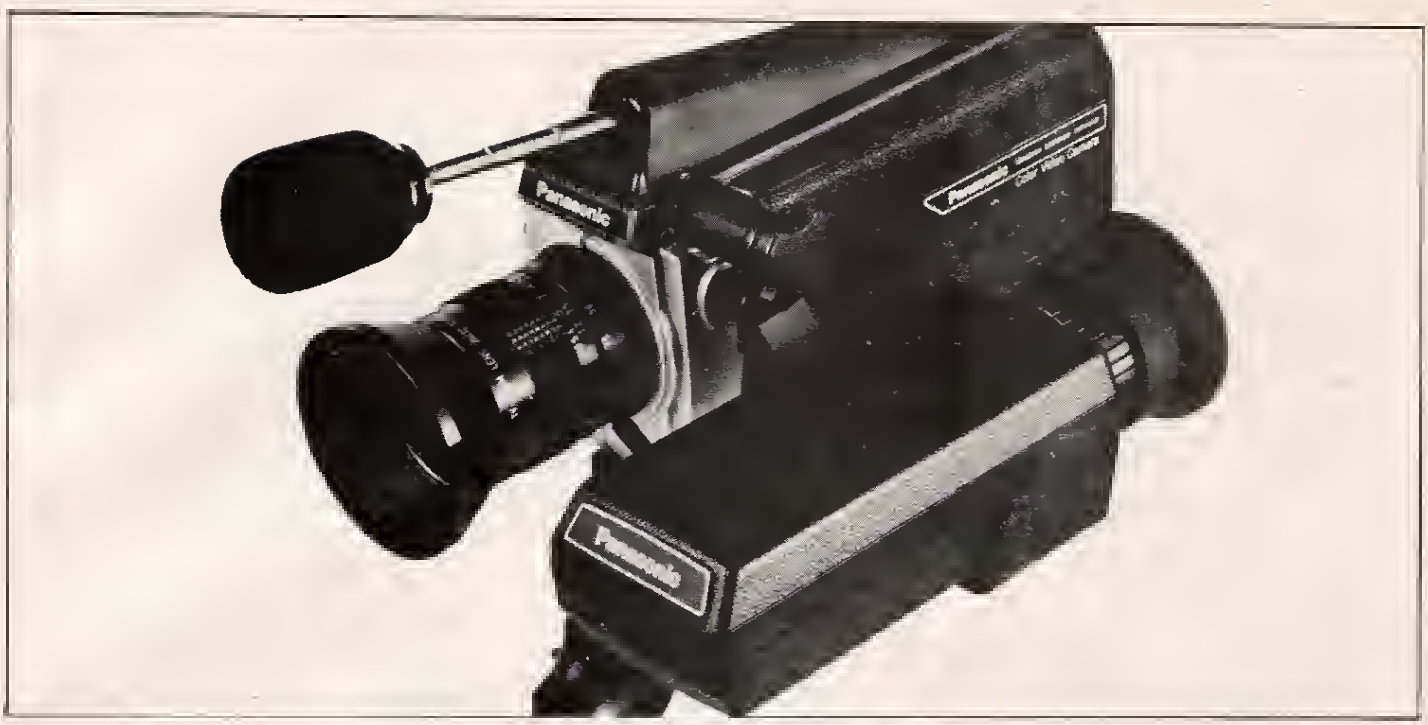
The greatest zoom ratio available today in consumer cameras is 6:1, although it is predicted that longer zooms will be available to the average consumer in a few years. A standard zoom on a professional studio camera is 10:1.

If you plan to do a good deal of close-up work, you should get a camera with *macrofocus.* This is an extension of your camera's ability to zoom in which allows you to get a very close shot of your subject without losing focus and getting a blurry image. If you want to videotape your stamp collection, for instance, this feature is mandatory.

As far as lighting requirements, both black and white and color cameras are designed to work automatically in ordinary day or house light



Pictured here: a variety of Sony Beta equipment available for home use. The HVC-1000 and 2000 illustrate the vast differences between video cameras. The SL-3000 is a portable record unit.



A typical VHS color camera is Panasonic's PK-750. This single-tube vidicon unit is distinguished from the lower priced cameras by it's electronic viewfinder (actually a miniature TV monitor) and 6:1 zoom lens.

This is one distinct advantage video has over the additional lighting film requires Usually, a simple flip of a switch tells the video camera under what light it will be working

For example, the Panasonic WV-3200 color camera illustrates its light setting switch with pictures of the sun and a sun partially hidden behind a cloud, instantly showing you the adjustments to make for sunny and cloudy days The lens automatically adjusts itself to small variations within the specified range.

Some cameras make sharper pictures than others. For both black and white and color picture clarity, you will want to compare what is called *horizontal resolution.*

If you get very close to your television set, you will see that video pictures are made of many very small, closely spaced horizontal lines The more lines in your picture the more detail you get and hence the sharper your picture. Horizontal resolution tells you how many lines the camera will put in your picture On a specification sheet, horizontal resolution is a three-digit number and goes from about 200 up to as much as 600 The higher the number, the more lines you get—200, for example, simply means you get 200 lines in your picture

You will not need a camera that gives you much more than 300 lines. Most recorders presently have the capacity to record only that many, and a 600 line camera will do nothing to improve the situation. Check the literature that came with your videocassette recorder and see what its horizontal capabilities are; then find a camera to match.

You cannot see a camera's horizontal resolution through an optical viewfinder and it is very difficult to discern with an electronic. It is better to check the specification sheet. When comparing tapes made by two cameras within 50 lines of each other, you probably will not be able to see much difference, unless you own a giant screen projector

If you buy a color camera, the main technicality you will need to master is how to adjust the color Oddly enough, this function is called *white balance* though it sometimes is referred to as color temperature or color balance. It means you adjust the camera to admit colors the way your eyes see them. When you adjust the white balance, you keep out too much red or too much green the same way you would on a color television set

Some cameras require that you plug into your television set at home and adjust each color as it appears on the screen However, a desirable feature for beginners is an automatic white balance which balances all colors at the twist of a knob Instead of setting up your balance at home, you have the advantage of being able to do so on location

With these terms in mind you are ready to do your preliminary shopping.

Leave your credit cards and checkbook at home on purpose so you cannot be pressured into buying As you shop for your camera, also shop for a salesperson with whom you feel comfortable This is someone who will encourage you to play with all the cameras in the store and show you how to operate them. Learn how to use all the features on a camera, and compare similar features on different cameras.

Do not buy the first camera which impresses you. If you are told the price is a special that will end that day, at least leave to call another store and compare prices. It is a mark of intelligence to give yourself space between the sales pitch and the decision to buy.

The most important element in selecting a camera is finding how it feels; good salespeople should be happy to encourage you in these activities because they know they will make sales if you get involved with their product. If your salesperson makes you feel like you are wasting his time, look elsewhere.

If it comes down to a decision between two basically similar cameras, accessories most likely will be the deciding factor in your decision to buy one over the other Ask for a list of both the accessories included with the camera and the optional accessories available Get your salesperson to explain what each accessory will do so you can make a realistic comparison. For example, Sanyo's two color cameras include 16-foot cables. However, their black and white camera comes with a 20-foot cable.

If possible, rent a camera before you buy. If there are features you do not understand, do not like, or think you might not use, this is the best way to find out in advance

It is not possible to get videotape outfits on a rental basis in every community If you are able to find a dealer who does rent equipment, try to have your rental fee applied to your camera purchase price In Chicago, rental for a camera alone without a recorder runs around $50 a day, so the savings are worthwhile. Ask your salesperson for rates in your locale

At last! You are ready to buy You know what camera you want and you are satisfied with its picture, its use, its features and accessories. There remain two last items to check—what is the warranty on your camera, and where can you get it serviced?

The standard warranty on a video camera is 90 days parts and labor. This excludes your vidicon tube (that part of the camera which electronically processes your picture for transmission after it enters the lens) because it is easily damaged by slight mishandling. Do not settle for any less a warranty than 90 days, and read your camera's literature *very thoroughly* on how to keep from damaging your vidicon tube—they are costly to replace.

For servicing, your best bet is to deal with a store which has a service department on premises. If your store does not, inquire whether they will send your camera to the service center for you. If you end up buying from a store which does neither, get a list of local authorized service centers and find the one nearest you. You may save yourself grief by buying a camera whose service center is close by rather than one which would require you to send your camera by mail for servicing

Servicing a video camera is much like servicing a videotape recorder—a week to ten days on most problems Parts are readily available for most camera brands, but ask your dealer what the situation is for your particular camera

You have bought your camera! Now the best is yet to come After all that practical thinking and cautious comparison, you are ready to indulge your imagination Captain Kirk, take your seat on the bridge!

Sporting Events Some salespeople will tell you that one use for your camera is taping ball games This is misleading No stadium in the country will allow you in to a professional game with a videotape camera Exclusive videotaping rights are granted contractually to local television stations and networks In other words, if you can watch the game on television, you will not be allowed to take your camera into the stadium If you are in doubt about taping your favorite sport, call your local stadium; do *not* ask your salesperson at the video store. Minor leagues may have a more liberal policy—certainly taping your kid's little league game should pose no problem

Parties: The major attraction of using your camera at a party is its playback capacity. Make a cassette, slap it into your VCR and your friends can see themselves on the tube. You can get people to loosen up by encouraging them to ham it up for the camera, if they really get loose, you will have . . .

Swingers' Tapes Some people get together specifically to tape themselves engaged in various sexual activities and then send the tape around looking for new participants. There are magazines and clubs which specifically cater to this audience Enough said.

Home X Movies: Well, not quite enough If you, your spouse or paramour and your camera decide to make it a threesome, you will need a tripod

Holiday Memories: People of a less exhibitionistic bent enjoy taping holiday activities Taping a child's birthday party, a wedding or a bar mitzvah captures unique and often-missed detail.

Recording the Grandchildren: Grandparents find making tapes of their grandchildren is a nice way to show off the kids and remember their visits

Recording the Grandparents: Turn the camera on the older members of your family and you have the world's best genealogical records.

Terminal Illness: A terminally ill family member may find great comfort in making a tape to leave behind His or her family may find great comfort as well in having such a memento Discretion is advised as some people may find this emotionally taxing

Video "Pen" Pals As more people purchase video cassette recorders and cameras, there will be a rise of video "pen" pals A classified ad in a video magazine should serve as an introduction and start you off.

Videotape Your Possessions This is a good idea from both insurance and storage angles. In the event of theft, a videotape of a stamp or other collection can aid insurance claims. Store this tape in your safe deposit box

Video Security Systems Video cameras can enable you to see who is at the door, what caused that strange noise upstairs or what the baby is up to Systems can be adapted to individual household needs

What do you do with your films and slides if you buy a video camera? Convert them all to videotape! There are two ways to do this. You can purchase an accessory (not available with all cameras) which will allow you to transfer your films yourself For example, Sony's HVC-1000 color camera has a telecine ("tele" for television, "cine" for film as in cinema) adaptor, the VCR-3, which will enable you to put your still pictures or Super 8 film on videocassette Quasar's film/tape converter KT502QF has an audio dubbing system which enables you to put sound over silent films as you transfer them to tape. Such accessories are now available in the $150 to $175 range

The Fotomat people recently have introduced a service of transferring film to videotape The cost of transferring 80 minutes of Super 8 film at the 18-feet-per-second speed onto either VHS or Beta format videocassettes is about $35.00, plus the cost of tape (if you supply your own cassette, there is a handling charge of two dollars). They also transfer regular 8mm film and slides Orders require special labelling and instructions so it is best to stop by a Fotomat and get literature before you bring in your order They will also send you literature by mail

With your camera and videocassette you are now among the pioneers in the world of video technology From here you should be all set to get a special effects generator, and editing machine, maybe another camera . . . ahead Warp Factor 8! ■

Learn how to use all the features on a camera, and compare similar features on different cameras.

NEWSLINE

(Continued from Page 31)

ence in television set manufacturing and continuing interest by the public in purchasing new video technology, but electronics execs are scratching their heads over the 59per cent jump in sales of VCRs over the first six month statistics of 1979 vs. 1980, while sales of color tubes dropped nearly 8 per cent during the same period.

RATINGS

Up The Ratings

More people are tuning into Public Broadcasting for their prime time viewing than ever before, according to PBS president Larry Grossman. During the month of March of this year, over 52,000,000 television households, or an impressive 68.2 per cent of the viewing audience, watched public TV. That is a 3 per cent increase over the same month one year ago and a staggering 39 per cent leap in viewership over March of 1975.

Daytime viewership is also up, with 50.5 per cent of the television households in the U.S. opting for Public Television over the standard game shows and soaps available on the networks. That is an increase of 55 per cent over the audiences recorded five years earlier.

One of the highest rated PBS programs, Grossman noted, was a recent *National Geographic Special, Invisible World* which copped an 11 per cent share of the audience, about the same as *Live From Studio 8-H* on NBC. But while the NBC program was a flop in the ratings, PBS seems content with their comparatively small slice of the ratings pie. They may not be up there with the 30-plus percentages the networks rack up, but they are certainly working on it.

Big Brother's Still Watching—But Now He's On Tape!

Arbitron continues to try to unravel the demographics and time patterns of VCR owners with its second study of VCR use, while Media Statistics, Inc., which hopes to be the Nielson of cable viewing, is conducting a study of some of the two million plus homes carrying Cable News Network and the "superstations" (KTVU/San Francisco, WGN/Chicago, WTBS/Atlanta, WOR/New York) special transmissions. The study will break down the minute-by-minute viewing habits of the surveyed households.

NEW RELEASES

From TIME LIFE VIDEO:

Gimme Shelter—*(1970), the Altamont Concert, featuring the Rolling Stones, the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. David Maysles, Director.*

The Europeans—*starring Lee Remick.*

The Collector—*(1965), starring Terrence Stamp and Samantha Eggar. William Wyler, Director.*

Providence—*(1977), starring Dirk Bogarde, John Gielgud, Ellen Burstyn and David Warner. Alain Resnais, Director.*

From RCA SELECTAVISION (disc).

Gimme Shelter—*(1970), the Altamont Concert, featuring the Rolling Stones, the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. David Maysles, Director.*

Z—*(1969), starring Yves Montand and Irene Papas. Costa-Gavras, Director.*

The Man Who Fell To Earth—*(1977), starring David Bowie, Rip Torn. Nicholas Roeg, Director.*

Swept Away—*(1975), starring Giancarlo Giannini, Mariangela Melato. Lina Wertmuller, Director.*

Pumping Iron—*(1977), starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lou Ferrigno. Robert Fiore and George Butler, Directors.*

Richard III—*(1956), starring Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson and Claire Bloom. Laurence Olivier, Director.*

La Strada—*(1956), starring Anthony Quinn and Richard Basehart. Federico Fellini, Director.*

The Seventh Seal—*(1956), starring Max Von Sydow. Ingmar Bergman, Director.*

The Emperor Jones—*(1933), starring Paul Robeson. Based on the play by Eugene O'Neill. Dudley Murphy, Director.*

Pygmalion—*(1938), starring Leslie Howard, Wendy Hiller and Wilfrid Lawson. Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard, Directors.*

From ABC VIDEO ENTERPRISES (tape and disc):

The Miracle of Lake Placid—*highlights of the 1980 Winter Olympics.*

Love Among the Ruins—*(1975), made-for-tv movie starring Katherine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier. George Cukor, Director.*

Night Stalker—*(1971), and* **Night Strangler**—*(1972), made-for-tv movies starring Darren McGavin. John Llewellyn Moxey and Dan Curtis, Directors.*

Griffith and Phoenix—*(1976), made-for-tv movie, starring Peter Falk and Jill Clayburgh. Daryl Duke, Director.*

Notorious—*(1946), starring Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman. Alfred Hitchcock, Director.*

Spellbound—*(1945), starring Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck. Alfred Hitchcock, Director.*

Paradine Case—*(1948), starring Gregory Peck, Charles Laughton and Ethel Barrymore. Alfred Hitchcock, Director.*

Portrait of Jennie—*(1948), starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotton. William Dieterle, Director.*

Intermezzo—*(1939), starring Leslie Howard and Ingrid Bergman. Gregory Ratoff, Director.*

The Spiral Staircase—*(1946), starring Dorothy McGuire and George Brent. Robert Siodmak, Director.*

Take the Money and Run—*(1969), starring Woody Allen, Janet Margolin and Jackson Beck. Woody Allen, Director.*

They Shoot Horses Don't They?—*(1969), starring Jane Fonda, Michael Sarrazin and Susannah York. Sydney Pollack, Director.*

Straw Dogs—*(1971), starring Dustin Hoffman and Susan George. Sam Peckinpah, Director.*

Charly—*(1968), starring Cliff Robertson and Claire Bloom. Ralph Nelson, Director.*

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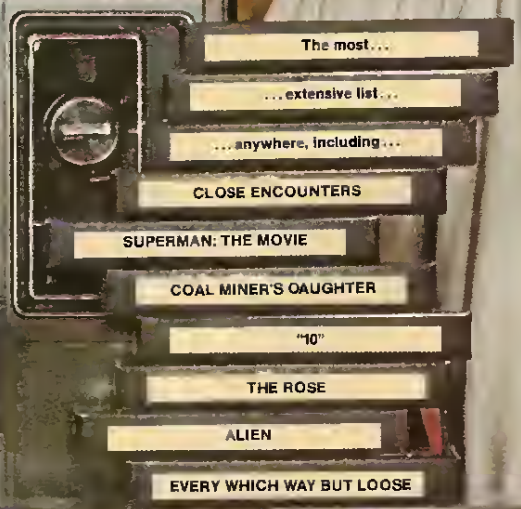

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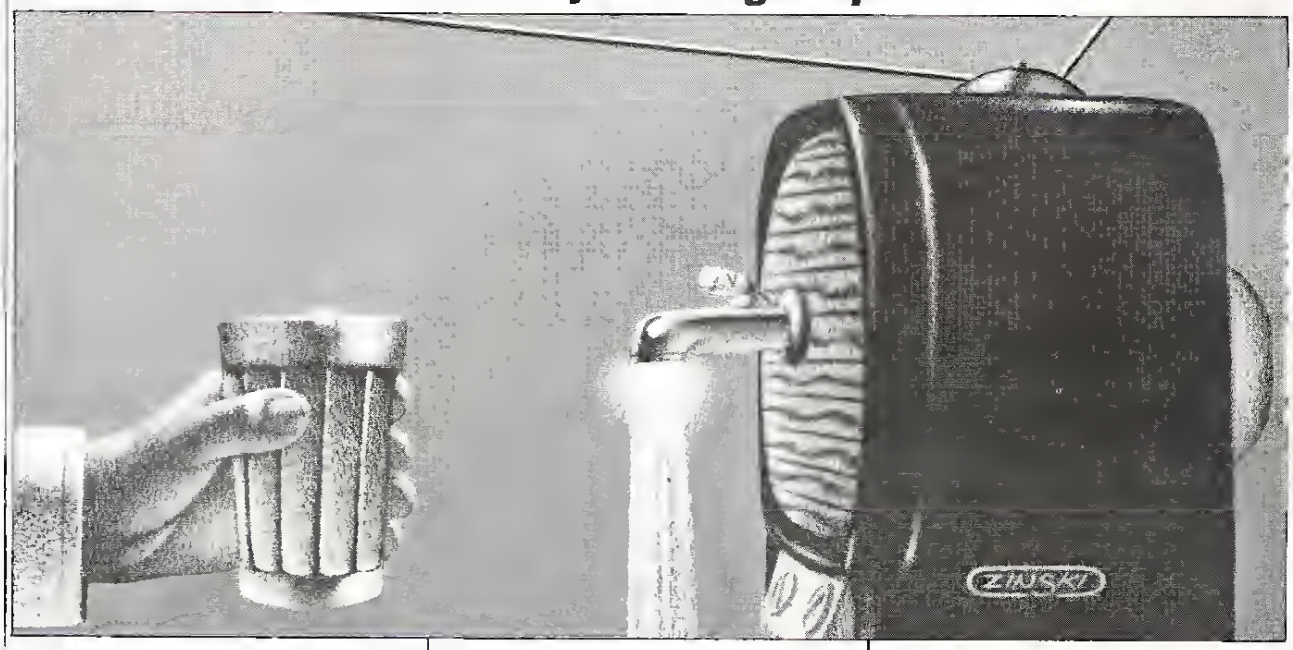

Tired of being taken for a ride by Sheriff Lobo, B.J. or the Dukes of Hazard? Need relief from the weekly heartaches on *Dallas* and *Little House*? If you can be cured of these TV-addict withdrawl pains by 30 minutes of *Dobie Gillis* or an hour of *Maverick*, this column is for you.

Many of us enjoy reliving those thrilling days of yesteryear by watching syndicated reruns. Even more might have fun preserving these moments on tape before they disappear forever. The main problem, however, is the poor viewer has no control over which reruns reach his local independent stations.

For example, once very popular programs such as *The Fugitive* and *Route 66* are seen practically nowhere because stations do not buy them from the companies that now distribute films. There are many reasons for this: for example, the above shows were filmed in black and white and most stations prefer running color; rare exceptions being "classics" like *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners*. In this monthly space, I will show you how to get around your local programmers' dull and unimaginative schedules.

The first obstacle to overcome, of course, is the purchasing of a video cassette recorder, a subject better treated in depth in future issues of this magazine. Once this is done, contact out-of-town friends or relatives who have compatible tape units and exchange local *TV Guides* with them. Upon examining the *Guide*, you probably will be surprised at the programs airing in the area, primarily on independent (non-network) stations.

Syndicated reruns which you cannot stomach might be the very shows somebody else would trade their last picture tube for.

Some programs can be more entertaining now than they were the first time around. Many shows once-popular are now exiled to near-obscurity, but (at the time of writing) they have been running in some areas: Channel 36 from San Jose, California, features both *The Fugitive* and *Ben Casey*. The aforementioned *Dobie Gillis* can be found on Channel 3 out of Madison, Wisconsin. Channel 11 from Seattle-Tacoma, Washington, broadcasts *Route 66*. And Channel 9 from Chicago—available on a great many cable systems across the nation—actually runs the original underwater classic, *Sea Hunt*.

As you can see, shows you have not thought about in years are now at your fingertips. How you can get those listings transferred from print to your television screen is easier than you might think. The syndicated reruns which you cannot stomach anymore on your local stations might be the very shows that somebody else would trade their last picture tube for.

Being a video trading veteran myself, I can easily illustrate this last point. One of my favorite shows is *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* This is another program that was once a regular top ten network favorite but is seldom seen these days . . . unless you live in Detroit, Baltimore or Madison, Wisconsin. While *U.N.C.L.E.* has not been

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Overview by LARRY CHARET

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seen in Chicago or New York in over five years, it has been airing in these three cities for quite some time. I have been able to get episodes of *U.N.C.L.E.* on tape by trading locally broadcast programs like *Marshal Dillon*, *It Takes A Thief* or even *Harry O*, a *CBS Late Movie* offering that is not shown in some cities.

Shows being rerun on *The CBS Late Movie* quite often are sought after by tape collectors (*Harry O*, *The Avengers*—old and new, *Columbo*, *Night Stalker*, and so on). However, not all of CBS's affiliate stations elect to air some or all of these programs. Some stations would rather run local movies, sports events or reruns and sell more commercial time themselves. As a result, major population centers such as Houston and Cleveland have never broadcast these CBS offerings. So, you might even have access to network programs that traders elsewhere will want.

One important note concerning legality: this matter is not very clear. Recent court decisions indicate such trading activity would be permissible as long as no money is changing hands. Upcoming interpretations and litigation might change or expand upon this, and we will be staying on top of it all in the news and features sections of *Video Action*.

The purpose of Vintage Video Action will be to aid the novice and seasoned trader alike by providing information as to what shows are on in various cities, episode guides to series, actors' credits, or anything you would like to know about television of days past.

Video Action would like you to think of this space as belonging to you. We want your queries and suggestions, so during that next commercial break send them to:

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2701 W. Howard Street
Chicago, Illinois 60645

Until we are able to get your questions in print, we have taken the liberty of polling our editorial staff and friends, just to get the column off to a flying start.

Q. I understand that, years before the first James Bond movie *Doctor No*, a James Bond television program was aired in the United States. Any information?

A. Yes, indeed, The television version of the first James Bond novel, *Casino Royale*, was aired on the suspense anthology series *Climax!* on October 21, 1954. The cast included Barry Nelson as 007, Linda Christian as Valerie, and the incomparale Peter Lorre as LeChiffre.

Q. It seems that every time I turn on the tube, I trip across another series starring Harry Morgan or Robert Conrad. How about an index of their respective shows?

A. Harry Morgan has been featured in eight different series: *December Bride* (1954-1958), *Pete and Gladys*—a spin-off of *December Bride* (1960-1962), *The Richard Boone Show* (1963-1964), *Kentucky Jones* (1964-1965), *Dragnet* (1967-1970), *The D.A.* (1971-1972), *Hec Ramsey* (1972-1974), and, of course, the long-running *M*A*S*H* (1975 to the present).

Robert Conrad has starred in seven series so far: *Hawaiian Eye* (1959-1963), *Wild Wild West* (1965-1969), *The D.A.* (with the aforementioned Harry Morgan, (1971-1972), *Assignment Vienna* (1972-1973), *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (1976-1978), *The Duke* (1979), and *A Man Called Sloane* (1979-1980). He presently is scheduled to produce and star in a mini-series based upon the autobiography of Watergate spy G. Gordon Liddy.

Q. If memory serves me correctly, Mike Wallace once starred as the host of a television game show, didn't he?

A. Superstar newsman Mike Wallace emceed six different entertainment shows prior to his becoming a newsman: *All Around The Town* (1951-1952), *Who's The Boss?* (1954), *The Big Surprise* (1956-1957), *Who Pays?* (1959), *What's In a Word?* (1954), and what many people consider to be a dry run for *60 Minutes*, *Mile Wallace Interviews* (1957-1958—still seen in some parts of the nation on very-late-night rerun). Wallace has been a fixture on CBS News's quadrennial political party convention coverage, and he helped launch *60 Minutes* in the fall of 1968.

Q. We all know about Burt Reynold's two short-lived television series, but wasn't he something of a regular on television dramatic programs prior to his becoming a movie star?

A. He sure was. In addition to starring in *Hawk* (1966) and *Dan August* (1970-1971), Burt Reynolds was a co-star of two popular series: *Riverboat* (1959-1960) and *Gunsmoke* (1962-1965). Reynolds also starred in two television movies: *Run Simon Run* (1970) and *Hunters Are For Killing* (1970).

I doubt even Reynolds remembers all the various shows he did on television, but a list of his series guest appearances includes: *M Squad* (1959), *Schlitz Playhouse* (1959), *The Lawless Years* (1959), *Playhouse 90* (*Alas Babylon*, 1960), *Johnny Ringo* (1960), *Aquanauts* (1960, 1961), *Mike Shayne* (1961), *Zane Grey* (1961), *Route 66* (1962), *Branded* (1965), *Flipper* (1965), *The F.B.I.* (1965), *12 O'Clock High* (1965), *Gentle Ben* (1967), *Love American Style* (1970) and, of course, a great many talk shows, including *The Tonight Show* as guest host.

We'll see you next month. ■

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REVIEWS

(Continued from Page 62)

behind the scenes intrigue he sets up at the network. As a former television critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Granger has much to say about the state of the medium . . . none of it good. The McCarthy blacklistings in the industry play prominently in the story, but the author does not seem to feel that it has ever ended. McCarthy and his ilk may be gone, but the executives themselves are portrayed as all to happy to continue his work. Nor are these conditions a product of the times or a corruption coming from age. Television inherited its cynicism from its not so distant ancestor, radio.

Without the integrity of the first generation of television broadcasters to keep it pure, network news is doomed, or so Granger tells us through Victor Talley, an Eric Severaid-type character. Talley warns Heron: "If you go, I go and the concept of news as we have developed it for the past thirty years go with it. Network news remains the last rampart of serious television journalism. The locals sell news now like cornflakes. They all have news teams. They wear little uniforms on camera . . . But you [Heron] serve a useful purpose in the present structure of this ephemeral organization. Remove you and the roof falls in. And that includes the concept of news presentation."

Still, despite Talley's warning, it is already too late. His fellow journalists clamor for a statement from Heron regarding the murder of Simon Kinzie, prompting Heron to observe, "This is crazy. The press interviews the press over a story in the press. It's at least incestuous." At least.

Granger certainly makes his point in *Sweeps*. He appears to be a man not particularly fond of television and downright disdainful of the men who run it. But television and office politics aside, Granger does present a most credible mystery in *Sweeps*. He takes the reader through a maze of intrigue and psychological terror that leaves the reader breathless at tale's end.

But when all is said and done, *Sweeps* boils down to this:

". . . I knew that if I stirred up the waters around you, made you muddy, you'd sink," Heron is told. "You know your television politics, all right," Heron replies.

And so, it seems, does Bill Granger.

—Paul Kupperberg

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So if you want true color and sharpness from your home video recorder, there's one sure way to get it. Get the same brand of tape. Get Scotch Videocassettes. They're specially formulated and engineered to give you all the color, the clarity, the brilliance, the performance your VTR can deliver.

That's what you'd expect from Scotch. We invented video tape over 20 years ago, and we've been responsible for most of its technological advances ever since. ...advances the networks use to show their true colors.

To show *your* true colors, get Scotch Videocassettes. In both Beta and VHS formats.

SCOTCH® VIDEOCASSETTES. THE TRUTH COMES OUT.

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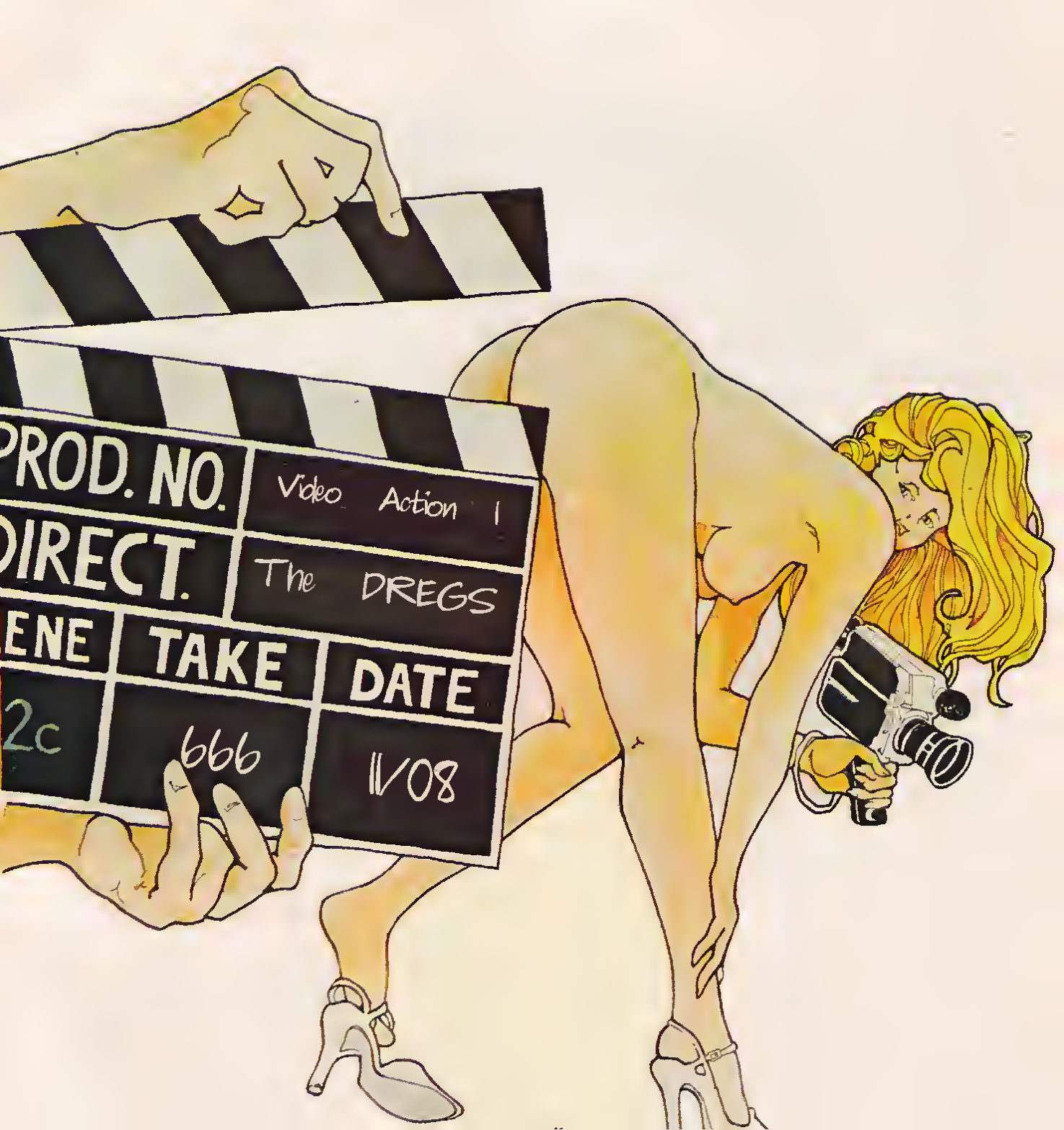
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